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EUROPE

IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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BY

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PREFACE

THE history of Mediaeval Europe is so vast a subject that the attempt to deal with it in a small compass must entail either severe compression or what may appear at first sight reckless omission.

The path of compression has been trodden many times, as in J. H. Robinson's *Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, or in such series as the 'Periods of European History' published by Messrs. Rivingtons for students, or text-books of European History published by the Clarendon Press and Messrs. Methuen.

To the authors of all these I should like to express my indebtedness both for facts and perspective, as to Mr. H. W. Davis for his admirable summary of the mediaeval outlook in the Home University Library series; but in spite of so many authorities covering the same ground, I venture to claim for the present book a pioneer path of 'omission'; it may be reckless but yet, I believe, justifiable.

It has been my object not so much to supply students with facts as to make Mediaeval Europe live, for the many who, knowing nothing of her history, would like to know a little, in the lives of her principal heroes and villains, as well as in the tendencies of her classes, and in the beliefs and prejudices of her thinkers. This task I have found even more difficult than I had expected, for limits of space have insisted on the omission of many events and names I would have wished to include. These I have sacrificed to the hope of creating reality and arousing interest, and if I have in any way succeeded I should like to pay my thanks first of all to Mr. Henry Osborn Taylor for his two volumes of *The Mediaeval Mind* that have been my chief inspiration, and then to the many authors whose names and books I give elsewhere, and whose researches have enabled me to tell my tale.

IERNE L. PLUNKET.

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I

THE GREATNESS OF ROME

'*Ave, Roma Immortalis!*', '*Hail, Immortal Rome!*' This cry, breaking from the lips of a race that had carried the imperial eagles from the northern shores of Europe to Asia and Africa, was no mere patriotic catchword. It was the expression of a belief that, though humanity must die and personal ambitions fade away, yet Rome herself was eternal and unconquerable, and what was wrought in her name would outlast the ages.

In the modern world it is sometimes necessary to remind people of their citizenship, but the Roman never forgot the greatness of his inheritance. When St. Paul, bound with thongs and condemned to be scourged, declared, 'I am Roman born,' the Captain of the Guard, who had only gained his citizenship by paying a large sum of money, was afraid of the prisoner on whom he had laid hands without a trial.

To be a Roman, however apparently poor and defenceless, was to walk the earth protected by a shield that none might set aside save at great peril. Not to be a Roman, however rich and of high standing, was to pass in Roman eyes as a 'barbarian', a creature of altogether inferior quality and repute.

'Be it thine, O Roman,' says Virgil, the greatest of Latin poets, 'to govern the nations with thy imperial rule': and such indeed was felt by Romans to be the destiny of their race.

Stretching on the west through Spain and Gaul to the Atlantic, that vast 'Sea of Darkness' beyond which according to popular belief the earth dropped suddenly into nothingness, the outposts of the Empire in the east looked across the plains of Mesopotamia towards Persia and the kingdoms of central Asia. Babylon 'the Wondrous', Syria, and Palestine with its

turbulent Jewish population, Egypt, the Kingdom of the Pharaohs long ere Romulus the City-builder slew his brother, Carthage, the Queen of Mediterranean commerce, all were now Roman provinces, their lustre dimmed by a glory greater than they had ever known.

The Mediterranean, once the battle-ground of rival Powers, had become an imperial lake, the high road of the grain ships that sailed perpetually from Spain and Egypt to feed the central market of the world; for Rome, like England to-day, was quite unable to satisfy her population from home cornfields. The fleets that brought the necessaries of life convoyed also shiploads of oriental luxuries, silks, jewels, and perfumes, transported from Ceylon and India in trading-sloops to the shores of the Red Sea, and thence by caravans of camels to the port of Alexandria.

Other trade routes than the Mediterranean were the vast network of roads that, like the threads of a spider's web, kept every part of the Empire, however remote, in touch with the centre from which their common fate was spun. At intervals of six miles were 'post-houses', provided each with forty or more horses, that imperial messengers, speeding to or from the capital with important news, might dismount and mount again at the different stages, hastening on their way with undiminished speed.

How firm and well made were their roads we know to-day, when, after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries of traffic, we use and praise them still. They hold in their strong foundations one secret of their maker's greatness, that the Roman brought to his handiwork the thoroughness inspired by a vision not merely of something that should last a few years or even his lifetime, but that should endure like the city he believed eternal.

It was the boast of Augustus, 27 B.C.–A.D. 14, the first of the Roman Emperors, that he had found his capital built of brick and had left it marble; and his tradition as an architect passed to his successors. There are few parts of what was once the Roman Empire that possess no trace to-day of massive aqueduct or Forum, of public baths or stately colonnades. In Rome itself, the Colosseum, the scene of many a martyr's death and gladiator's

struggle; elsewhere, as at Nîmes in southern France, a provincial amphitheatre; the aqueduct of Segovia in Spain, the baths in England that have made and named a town; the walls that mark the outposts of empire—all are the witnesses of a genius that dared to plan greatly, nor spared expense or labour in carrying out its designs.

Those who have visited the Border Country between England and Scotland know the Emperor Hadrian's wall, twenty feet high by seven feet broad, constructed to keep out the fierce Picts and Scots from this the most northern of his possessions. Those of the enemy that scaled the top would find themselves faced by a ditch and further wall, bristling with spears; while the legions flashed their summons for reinforcements from guardhouse to guardhouse along the seventy miles of massive barrier. All that human labour could do had made the position impregnable.

A scheme of fortifications was also attempted in central Europe along the lines of the Rhine and Danube. These rivers provided the third of the imperial trade routes, and it is well to remember them in this connexion, for their importance as highways lasted right through Roman and mediaeval into modern times. Railways have altered the face of Europe: they have cut through her waste places and turned them into thriving centres of industry: they have looped up her mines and ports and tunnelled her mountains: there is hardly a corner of any land where they have not penetrated; and the change they have made is so vast that it is often difficult to imagine the world before their invention. In Roman times, in neighbourhoods where the sea was remote and road traffic slow and inconvenient, there only remained the earliest of all means of transport, the rivers. The Rhine and Danube, one flowing north-west, the other south-east, both neither too swift nor too sluggish for navigation, were the natural main high roads of central Europe: they were also an obvious barrier between the Empire and barbarian tribes.

To connect the Rhine and Danube at their sources by a massive wall, to establish forts with strong garrisons at every point where these rivers could be easily forded, such were the precautions by which wise Emperors planned to shut in Rome's

civilization, and to keep out all who would lay violent hands upon it.

The Emperor Augustus left a warning to his successors that they should be content with these natural boundaries, lest in pushing forward to increase their territory they should in reality weaken their position. It is easy to agree with his views centuries afterwards, when we know that the defences of the Empire, pushed ever forward, snapped at the finish like an elastic band; but the average Roman of imperial days believed his nation equal to any strain.

It was a boast of the army that 'Roman banners never retreat'. If then a tribe of barbarians were to succeed in fording the Danube and in surprising some outpost fort, the legions sent to punish them would clamour not merely to exact vengeance and return home, but to conquer and add the territory to the Empire. In the case of swamps or forest land the clamour might be checked; but where there was pasturage or good agricultural soil, it would be almost irresistible. Emigrants from crowded Italy would demand leave to form a colony, traders would hasten in their footsteps, and soon another responsibility of land and lives, perhaps with no natural protection of river, sea, or mountains, would be added to Rome's burden of government. Such was the fertile province of Dacia, north of the Danube, a notable gain in territory, but yet a future source of weakness.

At the head of the Empire stood the Emperor, 'Caesar Augustus', the commander-in-chief of the army, the supreme authority in the state, the fountain of justice, a god before whose altar every loyal Roman must burn incense and bow the knee in reverence.

It was a great change from the old days, when Rome was a republic, and her Senate, or council of leading citizens, had been responsible to the rest of the people for their good or bad government. The historian Tacitus, looking back from imperial days with a sigh of regret, says that in that happy age man could speak what was in his mind without fear of his neighbours, and draws the contrast with his own time when the Emperor's spies wormed their way into house and tavern, paid to betray

those about them to prison or death for some chance word or incautious action. Yet Rome by her conquests had brought on herself the tyranny of the Empire.

It is comparatively easy to rule a small city well, where fraud and self-seeking can be quickly detected; but when Rome began to extend her boundaries and to employ more people in the work of government, unscrupulous politicians appeared. These built up private fortunes during their term of office: they became senators, and the Senate ceased to represent the will of the people and began to govern in the interests of a small group of wealthy men. Members of their families became governors of provinces, first in Italy, and then as conquests continued, across the mountains in Gaul and Spain, and beyond the seas in Egypt and Asia Minor. Except in name, senators and governors ceased to be simple citizens and lived as princes, with officials and servants ready to carry out their slightest wish.

Perhaps it may seem odd that the Roman people, once so fond of liberty that they had driven into exile the kings who oppressed them, should afterwards let themselves be bullied or neglected by a hundred petty tyrants; but in truth the people had changed even more than the class of 'patricians' to whom they found themselves in bondage.

No longer pure Roman or Latin, but through conquest and intermarriage of every race from the stalwart Teuton to the supple Oriental or swarthy Egyptian, few amongst the men and women crowding the streets of Rome remembered or reverenced the traditions of her early days. Rome stood for military glory, luxury, culture, at her best for even-handed justice, but no longer for an ideal of liberty. If national pride was satisfied, and adequate food and amusement provided, the Roman populace was content to be ruled from above and to hail rival senators as masters, according to the extent of their promises and success. A failure to fulfil such promises, resulting in a lost campaign or a dearth of corn, would throw the military tyrant of the moment from his pedestal, but only to set up another in his place.

It was an easy transition from the rule of a corrupt Senate to

that of an autocrat. 'Better one tyrant than many' was the attitude of mind of the average citizen towards Octavius Caesar, when under the title of Augustus he gathered to himself the supreme command over army and state and so became the first of the Emperors. Had he been a tactless man and shouted his triumph to the Seven Hills he would probably have fallen a victim to an assassin's knife; but he skilfully disguised his authority and posed as being only the first magistrate of the state.

Under his guiding hand the Senate was reformed, and its outward dignity rather increased than shorn. Augustus could issue his own 'edicts' or commands independently of the Senate's consent; but he more frequently preferred to lay his measures before it, and to let them reach the public as a senatorial decree. In this he ran no risk, for the senators, impressive figures in the eyes of the ordinary citizen, were really puppets of his creation. At any minute he could cast them away.

His fellow magistrates were equally at his mercy, for in his hands alone rested the supreme military command, the *imperium*, from which the title of *imperator*, or 'emperor', was derived. At first he accepted the office only for ten years, but at the end of that time, resigning it to a submissive Senate, he received it again amid shouts of popular joy. The tyranny of Augustus had proved a blessing.

Instead of corps of troops raised here and there in different provinces by governors at war with one another, and thus divided in their allegiance, there had begun to develop a disciplined army, whose 'legions' were enrolled, paid, and dismissed in the name of the all-powerful Caesar, and who therefore obeyed his commands rather than those of their immediate captains.

The same system of centring all authority in one absolute ruler was followed in the civil government. Governors of provinces, once petty rulers, became merely servants of the state. Caesar sent them from Rome: he appointed the officials under them: he paid them their salaries: and to him they must give an

account of their stewardship. 'If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend.' Such was the threat that induced Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea in the reign of Tiberius, to condemn to death a man he knew to be innocent of crime.

This is but one of many stories that show the dread of the Emperor's name in Rome's far-distant provinces. Governors, military commanders, judges, tax-collectors, all the vast army of officials who bore the responsibility of government on their shoulders, had an ultimate appeal from their decisions to Caesar, and were exalted by his smile or trembled at his frown.

It is not a modern notion of good government, this complete power vested in one man, but Rome nearly two thousand years ago was content that a master should rule her, so long as he would guarantee prosperity and peace at home. This under the early Caesars was at least secured.

Two fleets patrolled the Mediterranean, but their vigilance was not needed, save for an occasional brush with pirates. Naught but storms disturbed her waters. The legions on the frontiers, whether in Syria or Egypt, or along the Rhine and Danube, kept the barbarians at bay until Romans ceased to think of war as a trade to which every man might one day be called. It was a profession left to the few, the 'many' content to pay the taxes required by the state and to devote themselves to a civilian's life.

To one would fall the management of a large estate, another would stand for election to a government office, a third would become a lawyer or a judge. Others would keep shops or taverns or work as hired labourers, while below these again would be the class of slaves, whether prisoners of war sold in the market-place or citizens deprived of their freedom for crime or debt.

In Rome itself was a large population, living in uncomfortable lodging-houses very like the slum tenements of a modern city. Some of the inhabitants would be engaged in casual labour, some idle; but when the Empire was at its zenith lavish gifts of corn from the government stood between this otherwise destitute population and starvation. It crowded the streets to see Caesar pass, threw flowers on his chariot, and hailed him

as Emperor and God, and in return he bestowed on it food and amusements.

The huge amphitheatres of Rome and her provinces were built to satisfy the public desire for pageantry and sport; and, because life was held cheap, and for all his boasted civilization the Roman was often a savage at heart, he would spend his holidays watching the despised sect of Christians thrown to the lions, or hired gladiators fall in mortal struggle. 'We, about to die, salute thee.' With these words the victims of an emperor's lust of bloodshed bent the knee before the imperial throne, and at Caesar's nod passed to slay or be slain. The emperor's sceptre did not bring mercy, but order, justice, and prosperity above the ordinary standard of the age.

II

THE DECLINE OF ROME

THE years of Rome's greatness seemed to her sons an age of gold, but even at the height of her prosperity there were traces of the evils that brought about her downfall. An autocracy, that is, the rule of one man, might be a perfect form of government were the autocrat not a man but a god, thus combining superhuman goodness and understanding with absolute power. Unfortunately, Roman emperors were representatives of human nature in all its phases. Some, like Augustus, were great rulers; others, though good men, incompetent in the management of public affairs; whilst not a few led evil lives and regarded their office as a means of gratifying their own desires.

The Emperor Nero (54–68), for instance, was cruel and profligate, guilty of the murder of his half-brother, mother, and wife, and also of the deaths of numberless senators and citizens whose wealth he coveted. Because he was an absolute ruler his corrupt officials were able to bribe and oppress his subjects as they wished until he was fortunately assassinated. He was the last of his line, the famous House of Julius to which Augustus had belonged, and the period that followed his death was known as 'the year of the four Emperors', because during that time no less than four rivals claimed and struggled for the coveted honour.

Nominally, the right of election lay with the Senate, but the final champion, Vespasian (69–79), was not even a Roman nor an aristocrat, but a soldier from the provinces. He had climbed the ladder of fame by sheer endurance and his power of managing others, and his accession was a triumph not for the Senate but the legions who had supported him and who now learned their

power. Henceforward it would be the soldier with his naked sword who could make and unmake emperors, and especially the Praetorian Guard whose right it was to maintain order in Rome.

The gradual recognition of this idea had a disastrous effect on the government of the Empire. Too often the successful general of a campaign on the frontier would remember Vespasian and become obsessed with the thought that he also might be a Caesar. Led by ambition he would hold out to his legions hopes of the rewards they would receive were he crowned in Rome, and some sort of bargain would be struck, lowering the tone of the army by corrupting its loyalty and making its soldiers insolent and grasping.

The Senate attempted to deal with this difficulty of the succession by passing a law that every Emperor should, during his lifetime, name his successor, and that the latter should at once be hailed as Caesar, take a secondary share in the government, and have his effigy printed on coins. In this way he would become known to the whole Roman world, and when the Emperor died would at once be acknowledged in his place. Thus the Romans hoped to establish the theory that England expresses to-day in the phrase 'The King never dies'.

Though to a certain extent successful in their efforts to avoid civil war, they failed to arrest other evils that were undermining the prosperity of the government. One of these was the imperial expenditure. It was only natural that the Emperor should assume a magnificence and liberality in excess of his wealthiest subjects, but in addition he found it necessary to buy the allegiance of the Praetorian Guard and to keep the Roman populace satisfied in its demands for free corn and expensive amusements.

The standard of luxury had grown, and Romans no longer admired, except in books, the simple life of their forefathers. Instead the fashionable ideal was that of the East they had enslaved, and the Emperor was gradually shut off from the mass of his subjects by a host of court officials who thronged his ante-chambers and exacted heavy bribes for admission. In this unhealthy atmosphere suspicion and plots grew apace like weeds,

and money dripped through the imperial fingers as through a sieve, now into the pockets of one favourite, now of another.

'I have lost a day,' was said by the Emperor Titus (A. D. 79-81), whenever twenty-four hours had passed without his having made some valuable present to those about him. His courtiers were ready to fall on their knees and hail him for his liberality as 'Darling of the human race'; but he only reigned for two years. Had he lived to exhaust his treasury it is probable that the greedy throng would have passed a different verdict.

Extravagance is as catching as the plague, and the Roman aristocracy did not fail to copy the imperial example. Just as the Emperor was surrounded by a court, so every noble of importance had his following of 'clients' who would wait submissively on his doorstep in the morning and attend him when he walked abroad to the Forum or the Public Baths. Some would be idle gentlemen, the penniless younger sons of noble houses, others professional poets ready to write flattering verses to order, others again famous gladiators whose long death-roll of victims had made them as popular in Rome as a champion tennis-player or footballer in England to-day. All were united in the one hope of gaining something from their patron, perhaps a gift of money, or his influence to secure them a coveted office, at the least an invitation to a banquet or feast.

The class of senators to which most of these aristocrats belonged had grown steadily richer as the years of empire increased, building up immense landed properties something like the feudal estates of a later date. These 'villas', as they were called, were miniature kingdoms over which their owners had secured absolute power. Their affairs were administered by an agent, probably a favoured slave who had gained his freedom, assisted by a small army of officials. The principal subjects of the landlord would be the small proprietors of farms who paid a rent or did various services in return for their houses, while below these again would be a larger number of actual slaves, employed as household servants, bakers, shoe-makers, shepherds, &c.

The most striking thing about the Roman 'villa' was that it was absolutely self-contained. All that was needed for the life

of its inhabitants, whether food or clothing, could be grown and manufactured on the estate. The crimes that were committed there would be judged by the master or his agent, and from the former's decision there would be little hope of appeal. Where the proprietor was harsh or selfish, miserable indeed was the condition of those condemned to live on his 'villa'.

The income of the average senator in the fourth century A. D. was about £60,000, a very large sum when money was not as plentiful as it is to-day. Aurelius Symmachus, a young senator typical of this time, possessed no less than fifteen country seats, besides large estates in different parts of Italy and three town houses in Rome or her suburbs. It was his object to become Praetor of Rome, one of the highest offices in the city; and in order to gain popularity he and his father organized public games that cost them some £90,000. Lions and crocodiles were fetched from Africa, dogs from Scotland, a special breed of horses from Spain; while captured warriors were brought from Germany, whom he destined to fight with one another in the arena.

The life of this young senator, according to his letters, was controlled by purely selfish considerations. He did not want the praetorship in order to be of use to the Empire, but merely that the Empire might crown his career with a coveted honour. The same narrow outlook and lack of public spirit was common to the majority of the other men and women of his class, and so great was their blindness that they could not even see that they were undermining Rome's power, far less avail to save her.

More fatal even than the corruption of the aristocracy was the decline of the middle classes, usually called the backbone of a nation's greatness. 'The name of Roman citizen,' says a native of Marseilles in the fifth century, 'formerly so highly valued and even bought with a great price, is now . . . shunned, nay it is regarded with abomination.'

This change from the days of St. Paul may be traced back long before the time when Symmachus wasted his patrimony in bringing crocodiles from Africa and horses from Spain. Its cause was the gradual but constant increase of taxation required to

fill the imperial treasury, and the unequal scale according to which such taxation was levied.

Rome's main source of revenue was an impost on land, and ought by rights to have been exacted from the senatorial class that owned the majority of the large estates. Unfortunately, it was left to the local municipal councils, the *curias*, to collect this tax, and if it fell short of the amount required from the locality by the imperial treasury, the *curiales*, or class compelled as a duty to attend the councils, were held responsible for the deficit.

Here was a problem for Roman citizens of medium wealth, members of their *curia* by birth, quite unable to divest themselves of this more than doubtful honour, and conscious that their sons at eighteen must also accept the dignity and put their shoulders to the burden. It was one thing to assess the chief landlords of the neighbourhood at a sum that matched their revenues, it was another to obtain the money from them. In England to-day the man who refuses to pay his taxes is punished; in imperial Rome it was the tax-collector.

Possessed of money and influence, it was not hard for a senator to outwit mere *curiales*, either by obtaining an exemption from the Emperor, or by bribing the occasional inspectors sent by the central government to condone his refusal to pay. The imperial court set an example of corruption, and those who could imitate this example did so.

The *curiales*, faced by ruin, sought relief in various ways. Those with most wealth tried to raise themselves to senatorial rank: others, unable to achieve this, yet conscious that they must obtain the money required at all costs, demanded the heaviest taxes from those who could not resist them, so that the phrase spread abroad, 'So many *curiales* just so many robbers.'

Less important members of the middle classes, unable to pay their share of taxation or to force others to do so instead, tried in every way to divest themselves of an honour grown intolerable, and the legislation of the later Empire shows their efforts to escape out of the net in which the government tried to hold them enmeshed. Some sought the protection of the nearest land-

owners, and joined the dependants of their 'villas': others, though forbidden by law, entered the army: while others again sold themselves into slavery, since a master's self-interest would at least secure them food and clothing.

More desperate and adventurous spirits saw in brigandage a means both of livelihood and of revenge. Joining themselves to bands of criminals and escaped slaves, they infested the high roads, waylaid and robbed travellers, and carried off their spoils to mountain fastnesses. Thus, through fraud or violence, the ranks of the *curiales* diminished, and taxation fell with still heavier pressure on those who remained to support its burdens.

This evil state of affairs was intensified by the widespread system of slavery that, besides its bad influence on the character of both master and slave, had other economic defects. When forced labour and free work side by side, the former will nearly always drive the latter out of the market, because it can be provided more cheaply. A master need not pay his slaves wages; he can make them work as many hours as he chooses, and lodge and feed them just as he pleases. From his point of view it is more convenient to employ men who cannot leave his service however much they dislike the work and conditions. For these reasons business and trade tended to fall into the hands of wealthy slave-owners who could undersell the employers of free labour, and as the number of slaves increased the number of free workmen grew less.

In Rome, and the large towns also, free labourers who remained were corrupted like men and women of a higher rank by the general extravagance and love of pleasure. They did not agitate so much for a reform of taxation or the abolition of slavery, but for larger supplies of free corn and more frequent public games and spectacles.

An extravagant court, a corrupt government, slavery, class selfishness, these were some of the principal causes of Rome's decline; but in recording them it must be remembered that the taint was only gradual, like some corroding acid eating away good metal. Not all *curiales*, in spite of popular assertions, were robbers, not every taxpayer on the verge of starvation,

not every dependant of a 'villa' cowed and miserable. In many houses masters would free or help their slaves, slaves be found ready to die for their masters. The canker lay in the indifference of individual Roman citizens to evils that did not touch them personally, in the refusal to cure with radical reform even those that did, in the foolish confidence of the majority in the glory of the past as a safeguard for the present. 'Faith in Rome killed all faith in a wider future for humanity.'

This lack of vision has ruined many an empire and kingdom, and Rome only half-opened her eyes even when the despised barbarians who were to expose her weakness were already knocking at the imperial gates.

'Barbarian', we have noticed, was the epithet used by the Roman of the early Empire to describe and condemn the person not fortunate enough to share his citizenship.

At this time the most formidable of the barbarians were the German tribes who inhabited large stretches of forest and mountain land to the north of the Danube and east of the Rhine —a tall, powerfully built race for the most part with ruddy hair and fierce blue eyes, whose business was warfare, and the occupation of their leisure hours the chase or gambling.

In his book, the *Germania*, Tacitus, a famous Roman historian of the first century, describes these Teutons, and besides drawing attention to their primitive customs and lack of culture, he made copy of their simplicity to lash the vices of his own countrymen.

The Germans, he said, did not live in walled towns but in straggling villages standing amid fields. These were either shared as common pasturage or tilled in allotments, parcelled out annually amongst the inhabitants. A number of villages would form a *pagus* or canton, a number of *pagi* a *civitas* or state. At the head of the state was more usually a king, but sometimes only a number of important chiefs, or dukes, who would be treated with the utmost reverence.

It was their place to preside over the small councils that dealt with the less important affairs of the state, and to lay before the

larger meeting of the tribe measures that seemed to require public discussion. Lying round their camp fire in the moonlight the younger men would listen to the advice of the more experienced and clash their weapons as a sign of approval when some suggestion pleased them.

At the councils were chosen the *principes*, or magistrates, whose duty it was to administer justice in the various cantons and villages. Tribal law was very primitive in comparison with the Roman code that required highly trained lawyers to interpret it. Had a man betrayed his fellow villagers to their enemies, let him be hung from the nearest tree that all might learn the fitting reward of treachery. Had he turned coward and fled from the battle, let him be buried in a morass out of sight beneath a hurdle, that such shame should be quickly forgotten. Had he in a rage or by accident slain or injured a neighbour, let him pay a fine in compensation, half to his victim's nearest relations, half to the state. If the decision did not satisfy those concerned, the family of the injured person could itself exact vengeance, but since it would probably meet with opposition in so doing, more bloodshed would almost certainly result, and a feud, like the later Corsican *vendetta*, be handed down from generation to generation.

Such a state of unrest had no horror for the German tribesman. From his earliest days he looked forward to the moment when, receiving from his kinsmen the gift of a shield and sword, he might leave boyhood behind him and assume a man's responsibilities and dangers. With his comrades he would at once hasten to offer his services to some great leader of his tribe, and as a member of the latter's *comitatus*, or following, go joyfully out to battle.

Like the Spartan of old he went with the cry ringing in his ears, 'With your shield or on your shield!'

'It is a disgrace', says Tacitus, 'for the chief to be surpassed in battle . . . and it is an infamy and a reproach for life to have survived the chief and returned from the field.'

This statement explains the reckless daring with which the scattered groups of Germans would fling themselves time after

time against the disciplined Roman phalanxes. The women shared the hardihood of the race, bringing and receiving as wedding-gifts not ornaments or beautiful clothes but a warrior's horse, a lance, or sword.

'Lest a woman should think herself to stand apart from aspirations after noble deeds and from the perils of war, she is reminded by the ceremony that inaugurates marriage that she is her husband's partner in toil and danger, destined to suffer and die with him alike both in peace and war.'

Chaste, industrious, devoted to the interests of husband and children, yet so patriotic that, watching the battle, she would urge them rather to perish than retreat, the barbarian woman struck Tacitus as a living reproach to the many faithless, idle, pleasure-seeking wives and mothers of Rome in his own day. The German tribes might be uncouth, their armies without discipline, even their nobles ignorant of culture, but they were brave, hospitable, and loyal. Above all they held a distinction between right and wrong: they did not 'laugh at vice'.

It is probable that in the days of Tacitus his views were received throughout the Roman Empire with an amused shrug of the shoulders, for to many the Germans were merely good fighters, whose giant build added considerably to the glory of a triumphal procession, when they walked sullenly in their shackles behind the Victor's car. With the passing of the years into centuries, however, intercourse changed this attitude, and much of the contempt on one side and hatred on the other vanished.

Germans captured in childhood were brought up in Roman households and grew invaluable to their masters: numbers were freed and remained as citizens in the land of their captivity. The tribes along the borders became more civilized: they exchanged raw produce or furs in the nearest Roman markets for luxuries and comforts, and as their hatred of Rome disappeared admiration took its place. Something of the greatness of the Empire touched their imagination: they realized for the first time the possibilities of peace under an ordered government; and whole tribes offered their allegiance to a power that knew not only how to conquer but to rule.

Emperors, nothing loath, gathered these new forces under their standards as auxiliaries or allies (*foederati*), and Franks from Flanders, at the imperial bidding, drove back fellow barbarians from the left bank of the Rhine; while fair-haired Alemanni and Saxons fell in Caesar's service on the plains of Mesopotamia or on the arid sands of Africa. From auxiliary forces to the ranks of the regular army was an easy stage, the more so as the Roman legions were every year in greater need of recruits as the boundaries of the Empire spread.

It is at first sight surprising to find that the military profession was unpopular when we recall that it rested in the hands of the legions to make or dispossess their rulers; but such opportunities of acquiring bribes and plunder did not often fall to the lot of the ordinary soldier, while the disadvantages of his career were many.

A very small proportion of the army was kept in the large towns of the south, save in Rome that had its own Praetorian Guards: the majority of the legions defended the Rhine and Danube frontiers, or still worse were quartered in cold and foggy Britain, shut up in fortress outposts like York or Chester. English regiments to-day think little of service in far-distant countries like Egypt or India, indeed men are often glad to have the experience of seeing other lands; but the Roman soldier as he said farewell to his Italian village knew in his heart that it had practically passed out of his life. The shortest period of military service was sixteen years, the longest twenty-five; and when we remember that, owing to the slow and difficult means of transport, leave was impossible we see the Roman legionary was little more than the serf of his government, bound to spend all the best years of his life defending less warlike countrymen.

Moving with his family from outpost to outpost, the memories of his old home would grow blurred, and the legion to which he belonged would occupy the chief place in his thoughts. As he grew older his sons, bred in the atmosphere of war, would enlist in their turn, and so the military profession would tend to become a caste, handed down from father to son.

The soldier could have little sympathy with fellow citizens whose interests he did not share, but would despise them because they did not know how to use arms. The civilians, on their side, would think the soldier rough and ignorant, and forget how much they were dependent on his protection for their trade and pleasure. Instead of trying to bridge this gulf, the government, in their terror of losing taxpayers, widened it by refusing to let *curiales* enlist. At the same time they filled up the gaps in the legions with corps of Franks, Germans, or Goths; because they were good fighting material, and others of their tribe had proved brave and loyal.

In the same way, when land in Italy fell out of cultivation, the Emperor would send numbers of barbarians as *coloni* or settlers to till the fields and build themselves homes. At first they might be looked on with suspicion by their neighbours, but gradually they would intermarry and their sons adopt Roman habits, until in time their descendants would sit in municipal councils, and even rise to become Praetors or Consuls.

When it is said that the Roman Empire fell because of the inroads of barbarians, the impression sometimes left on people's minds is that hordes of uncivilized tribes, filled with contempt for Rome's luxury and corruption, suddenly swept across the Alps in the fifth century, laying waste the whole of North Italy. This is far from the truth. The peaceful invasion of the Empire by barbarians, whether as slaves, traders, soldiers, or colonists, was a continuous movement from early imperial days. There is no doubt that, as it increased, it weakened the Roman power of resistance to the actually hostile raids along the frontiers that began in the second and third centuries and culminated in the collapse of the imperial government in the West in the fifth. An army partly composed of half-civilized barbarian troops could not prove so trustworthy as the well-disciplined and seasoned Romans of an earlier age; for the foreign element was liable in some gust of passion to join forces with those of its own blood against its oath of allegiance.

As to the main cause of the raids, it was rather love of Rome's wealth than a sturdy contempt of luxury that led these barbarians

to assault the dreaded legions. Had it been mere love of fighting, the Alemanni would as soon have slain their Saxon neighbours as the imperial troops; but nowhere save in Spain, or southern Gaul, or on the plains of Italy could they hope to find opulent cities or herds of cattle. Plunder was their earliest rallying cry; but in the third century the pressure of other tribes on their flank forced them to redouble in self-defence efforts begun for very different reasons.

This movement of the barbarians has been called 'the Wandering of the Nations'. Gradually but surely, like a stream released from some mountain cavern, Goths from the North and Huns and Vandals from the East descended in irresistible numbers on southern Germany, driving the tribes who were already in possession there up against the barriers, first of the Danube and then of the Alps and Rhine.

Italy and Gaul ceased to be merely a paradise for looters, but were sought by barbarians, who had learned something of Rome's civilization, as a refuge from other barbarians who trod women and children underfoot, leaving a track wherever their cruel hordes passed red with blood and fire. With their coming, Europe passed from the brightness of Rome into the 'Dark Ages'.

III

THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY

WHEN Augustus became Emperor of Rome, Jesus Christ was not yet born. With the exception of the Jews, who believed in the one Almighty 'Jehovah', most of the races within the boundaries of the Empire worshipped a number of gods; and these, according to popular tales, were no better than the men and women who burned incense at their altars, but differed from them only in being immortal, and because they could yield to their passions and desires with greater success.

The Roman god 'Juppiter', who was the same as the Greek 'Zeus', was often described as 'King of gods and men'; but far from proving himself an impartial judge and ruler, the legends in which he appears show him cruel, faithless, and revengeful. 'Juno', the Greek 'Hera', 'Queen of Heaven', was jealous and implacable in her wrath, as the 'much-enduring' hero, Ulysses, found when time after time her spite drove him from his homeward course from Troy. 'Mercury', the messenger of the gods, was merely a cunning thief.

Most of the thoughtful Greeks and Romans, it is true, came to regard the old mythology as a series of tales invented by their primitive ancestors to explain mysterious facts of nature like fire, thunder, earthquakes. Because, however, this form of worship had played so great a part in national history, patriotism dictated that it should not be forgotten entirely; and therefore emperors were raised to the number of the gods; and citizens of Rome, whether they believed in their hearts or no, continued to burn incense before the altars of Juppiter, Juno, or Augustus in token of their loyalty to the Empire.

The human race has found it almost impossible to believe in

nothing, for man is always seeking theories to explain his higher nature and why it is he recognizes so early the difference between right and wrong. Far back in the third and fourth centuries before Christ, Greek philosophers had discussed the problem of the human soul, and some of them had laid down rules for leading the best life possible.

Epicurus taught that since our present life is the only one, man must make it his object to gain the greatest amount of pleasure that he can. Of course this doctrine gave an opening to people who wished to live only for themselves; but Epicurus himself had been simple, almost ascetic in his habits, and had clearly stated that although pleasure was his object, yet 'we can not live pleasantly without living wisely, nobly, and righteously'. The self-indulgent man will defeat his own ends by ruining his health and character until he closes his days not in pleasure but in misery.

Another Greek philosopher was Zeno, whose followers were called 'Stoics' from the *stoa* or porch of the house in Athens in which he taught his first disciples. Zeno believed that man's fortune was settled by destiny, and that he could only find true happiness by hardening himself until he grew indifferent to his fate. Death, pain, loss of friends, defeated ambitions, all these the Stoic must face without yielding to fear, grief, or passion. Brutus, the leader of the conspirators who slew Julius Caesar, was a Stoic, and Shakespeare in his tragedy shows the self-control that Brutus exerted when he learned that his wife Portia whom he loved had killed herself.

The teaching of Epicurus and Zeno did something during the Roman Empire to provide ideals after which men could strive, but neither could hold out hopes of a happiness without end or blemish. The 'Hades' of the old mythology was no heaven but a world of shades beyond the river Styx, gloomy alike for good and bad. At the gates stood the three-headed monster Cerberus, ready to prevent souls from escaping once more to light and sunshine.

Paganism was thus a sad religion for all who thought of the future: and this is one of the reasons why the tidings of

Christianity were received so joyfully. When St. Paul went to Athens he found an altar set up to 'the unknown God', showing that men and women were out of sympathy with their old beliefs and seeking an answer to their doubts and questions. He tried to tell the Greeks that the Christ he preached was the God they sought; but those who heard him ridiculed the idea that a Jewish peasant who had suffered the shameful death of the cross could possibly be divine.

The earliest followers of Christianity were not as a rule cultured people like the Athenians, but those who were poor and ignorant. To them Christ's message was one of brotherhood and love overriding all differences between classes and nations. Yet it did not merely attract because it promised immortality and happiness; it also set up a definite standard of right and wrong. The Jewish religion had laid down the Ten Commandments as the rule of life, but the Jews had never tried to persuade other nations to obey them—rather they had jealously guarded their beliefs from the Gentiles. The Christians on the other hand had received the direct command 'to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature'; and even the slave, when he felt within himself the certainty of his new faith, would be sure to talk about it to others in his household. In time the strange story would reach the ears of his master and mistress, and they would begin to wonder if what this fellow believed so earnestly could possibly be true.

In a brutal age, when the world was largely ruled by physical force, Christianity made a special appeal to women and to the higher type of men who hated violence. One argument in its favour amongst the observant was the life led by the early Christians—their gentleness, their meekness, and their constancy. It is one thing to suffer an insult through cowardice, quite another to bear it patiently and yet be brave enough to face torture and death rather than surrender convictions. Christian martyrs taught the world that their faith had nothing in it mean or spiritless.

Perhaps it may seem strange that men and women whose conduct was so quiet and inoffensive should meet with persecution

at all. Christ had told His disciples to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's', and the strength of Christianity lay not in rebellion to the civil government but in submission. This is true, yet the Christian who paid his taxes and took care to avoid breaking the laws of his province would find it hard all the same to live at peace with pagan fellow citizens. Like the Jew he could not pretend to worship gods whom he considered idols: he could not offer incense at the altars of Juppiter and Augustus: he could not go to a pagan feast and pour out a libation of wine to some deity, nor hang laurel branches sacred to the nymph Daphne over his door on occasions of public rejoicing.

Such neglect of ordinary customs made him an object of suspicion and dislike amongst neighbours who did not share his faith. A hint was given here and there by mischief makers, and confirmed with nods and whisperings, that his quietness was only a cloak for evil practices in secret; and this grew into a rumour throughout the Empire that the murder of newborn babies was part of the Christian rites.

Had the Christians proved more pliant the imperial government might have cleared their name from such imputations and given them protection, but it also distrusted their refusal to share in public worship. Lax themselves, the emperors were ready to permit the god of the Jews or Christians a place amongst their own deities; and they could not understand the attitude of mind that objected to a like toleration of Juppiter or Juno. The commandment 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me' found no place in their faith, and they therefore accused the Christians and Jews of want of patriotism, and used them as scapegoats for the popular fury when occasion required.

In the reign of Nero a tremendous fire broke out in Rome that reduced more than half the city to ruins. The Emperor, who was already unpopular because of his cruelty and extravagance, fearing that he would be held responsible for the calamity, declared hastily that he had evidence that the fire was planned by Christians; and so the first serious persecution of the new faith began.

Here is part of an account given by Tacitus, whose history of the German tribes we have already noticed:

'He, Nero, inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who under the vulgar appellation of Christians were already branded with deserved infamy.... They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for this melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race and honoured with the presence of the Emperor.'

Tacitus was himself a pagan and hostile to the Christians, yet he admits that this cruelty aroused sympathy. Nevertheless the persecutions continued under different emperors, some of them, unlike Nero, wise rulers and good men.

'These people', wrote the Spanish Emperor Trajan (98–117), referring to the Christians, 'should not be searched for, but if they are informed against and convicted they should be punished.'

Marcus Aurelius (161–180) declared that those who acknowledged that they were Christians should be beaten to death; and during his reign men and women were tortured and killed on account of their faith in every part of the Empire. The test required by the magistrates was nearly always the same, that the accused must offer wine and incense before the statue of the Emperor and revile the name of Christ.

The motive that inspired these later emperors was not Nero's innate love of cruelty or desire of finding a scapegoat, but genuine fear of a sect that grew steadily in numbers and wealth, and that threatened to interfere with the ordinary worship of the temples, so bound up with the national life.

In the reign of Trajan the Governor of Bithynia wrote to the Emperor complaining that on account of the spread of Christian teaching little money was now spent in buying sacrificial beasts. 'Nor', he added, 'are cities alone permeated by the contagion of this superstition, but villages and country parts as well.'

Emperors and magistrates were at first confident that, if only

they were severe enough in their punishments, the new religion could be crushed out of existence. Instead it was the imperial government that collapsed while Christianity conquered Europe.

Very early in the history of Christianity the Apostles had found it necessary to introduce some form of government into the Church; and later, as the faith spread from country to country, there arose in each province men who from their goodness, influence, or learning, were chosen by their fellow Christians to control the religious affairs of the neighbourhood. These were called 'Episcopi', or bishops, from the Latin word *Episcopus*, 'an overseer'. Tradition claims that Peter was the first bishop of the Church in Rome, and that during the reign of Nero he was crucified for loyalty to the Christ he had formerly denied.

To help the bishops a number of 'presbyters' or 'priests' were appointed, and below these again 'deacons' who should undertake the less responsible work. The first deacons had been employed in distributing the alms of the wealthier members of the congregation amongst the poor; and though in early days the sums received were not large, yet as men of every rank accepted Christianity regardless of scorn or danger and made offerings of their goods, the revenues of the Church began to grow. The bishops also became persons of importance in the world around them.

In time emperors and magistrates whose predecessors had believed in persecution came to recognize that it was not an advantage to the government, even a danger, and instead they began to consult and honour the men who were so much trusted by their fellow citizens. At last, in the fourth century, there succeeded to the throne an emperor who looked on Christianity not with hatred or dread, but with friendly eyes as a more valuable ally than the paganism of his fathers. This was the Emperor Constantine the Great.

IV

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

CONSTANTINE the Great was born at a time when the Empire was divided up between different emperors. His father, Constantius Chlorus, ruled over Spain, Gaul, and Britain; and when he died at York in A. D. 306, Constantine his eldest son succeeded to the government of these provinces. The new Emperor, who was thirty-two years old, had been bred in the school of war. He was handsome, brave, and capable, and knew how to make himself popular with the legions under his command without losing his dignity or letting them become undisciplined.

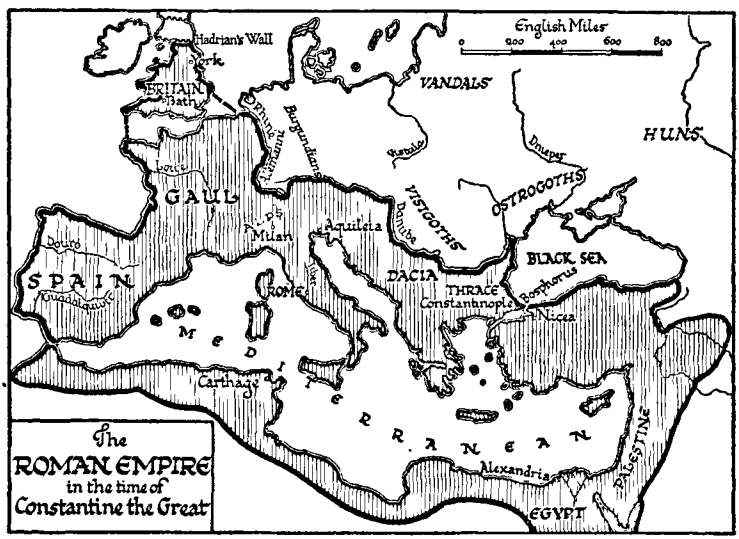
When he had reigned a few years he quarrelled with his brother-in-law Maxentius who was Emperor at Rome, and determined to cross the Alps and drive him from his throne. The task was difficult; for the Roman army, consisting of picked Praetorian Guards, and regiments of Sicilians, Moors, and Carthaginians, was quite four times as large as the invading forces. Yet Constantine, once he had made his decision, did not hesitate. He knew his rival had little military experience, and that the corruption and luxury of the Roman court had not increased either his energy or valour.

It is said also that Constantine believed that the God of the Christians was on his side, for as he prepared for a battle on the plains of Italy against vastly superior forces, he saw before him in the sky a shining cross and underneath the words 'By this conquer!' At once he gave orders that his legions should place on their shields the sign of the cross, and with this same sign as his banner he advanced to the attack. It was completely successful, the Roman army fled in confusion, Maxentius was

slain, and Constantine entered the capital almost unopposed. The arch in Rome that bears his name celebrates this triumph.

Constantine was now Emperor of the whole of Western Europe, and some years later, after a furious struggle with Licinius the Emperor of the East, he succeeded in uniting all the provinces of the Empire under his rule.

This was a joyful day for Christians, for though Constantine was not actually baptized until just before his death, yet,



throughout his reign, he showed his sympathy with the Christian religion and did all in his power to help those who professed it. He used his influence to prevent gladiatorial shows, abolished the horrible punishment of crucifixion, and made it easier than ever before for slaves to free themselves. When he could, he avoided pagan rites, though as Emperor he still retained the office of *Pontifex Maximus*, or 'High Priest', and attended services in the temples.

His mother, the Empress Helena, to whom he was devoted, was a Christian; and one of the old legends describes her

pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and how she found and brought back with her some wood from the cross on which Christ had been crucified.

Soon after Constantine conquered Rome he published the famous 'Edict of Milan' that allowed liberty of worship to all inhabitants of the Empire, whether pagans, Jews, or Christians. The latter were no longer to be treated as criminals but as citizens with full civil rights, while the places of worship and lands that had been taken from them were to be restored.

Later, as Constantine's interest in the Christians deepened, he departed from this impartial attitude and showed them special favours, confiscating some of the treasures of the temples and giving them to the Church, as well as handing over to it sums of money out of the public revenues. He also tried to free the clergy from taxation, and allowed bishops to interfere with the civil law-courts.

Many of these measures were unwise. For one thing, Christianity when it was persecuted or placed on a level with other religions only attracted those who really believed in Christ's teaching. When it received material advantages, on the other hand, the ambitious at once saw a way to royal favour and their own success by professing the new beliefs. A false element was thus introduced into the Church.

For another thing, few even of the sincere Christians could be trusted not to abuse their privileges. The fourth century did not understand toleration; and those who had suffered persecution were quite ready as a rule to use compulsion in their turn towards men and women who disagreed with them, whether pagans or those of their own faith. Quite early in its history the Church was torn by disputes, since much of its teaching had been handed down by 'tradition', or word of mouth, and this led to disagreement as to what Christ had really said or meant by many of his words. At length the Church decided that it would gather the principal doctrines of the 'Catholic' or 'universal' faith into a form of belief that men could learn and recite. Thus the 'Apostles' Creed' came into existence.

In spite of this definition of the faith controversy continued.

At the beginning of the fourth century a dispute as to the exact relationship of God the Father to God the Son in the doctrine of the Trinity broke out between Arius, a presbyter of the Church in Egypt, and the Bishop of Alexandria, the latter declaring that Arius had denied the divinity of Christ. Partisans defended either side, and the quarrel grew so embittered that an appeal was made to the Emperor to give his decision.

Constantine was reluctant to interfere. 'They demand my judgement,' he said, 'who myself expect the judgement of Christ. What audacity of madness!' When he found, however, that some steps must be taken if there was to be any order in the Church at all, he summoned a Council to meet at Nicea and consider the question, and thither came bishops and clergy from all parts of the Christian world. The meetings were prolonged and stormy; but the eloquence of a young Egyptian deacon called Athanasius decided the case against Arius; and the latter, refusing to submit to the decrees of the Council, was proclaimed a heretic, or outlaw. The orthodox Catholics, that is, the majority of bishops who were present, then drew up a new creed to express their exact views, and this took its name from the Council, and was called the 'Nicene Creed'. In a revised form it is still recited in all the Catholic churches of Christendom.

Arius, though defeated at the Council, succeeded in winning the Emperor over to his views, and Constantine tried to persuade the Catholics to receive him back into the Church. When this suggestion met with refusal the Emperor, who now believed that he had a right to settle ecclesiastical matters, was so angry that he tried to install Arius in one of the churches of his new city of Constantinople by force of arms. The orthodox bishop promptly closed and barred the gates, and riots ensued that were only ended by the death of Arius himself.

The schism, however, continued, and it may be claimed that its bitterness had a considerable influence in deciding the future of Europe by raising barriers between races that might otherwise have become friends. Arianism, like orthodox Catholicism, was full of the missionary spirit, and from its priests the half-civilized tribes of Goths and Vandals learned the new faith.

A Gothic bishop was present at the Council of Nicea, while another, Ulfilas, who had studied Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at Constantinople, afterwards translated a great part of the Bible into his own tongue. This is the first-known missionary Bible; and, though the original has disappeared, a copy made about a century later is in a museum at Upsala, written in Gothic characters in silver and gold on purple vellum.

The Goths regarded their Bible with deep awe, and carried it with them on their wanderings, consulting it before they went into battle. Like the Vandals, who had also been converted by the Arians, they considered themselves true Christians; but the orthodox Catholics disliked them as heretics almost more than the pagans.

Constantine himself imbibed the spirit of fanaticism; and when he became the champion of Arius, persecuted Athanasius, who had been made Bishop of Alexandria, and compelled him to go into exile. Athanasius went to Rome, where it is said that he was at first ridiculed because he was accompanied by two Egyptian monks in hoods and cowls. Western Europe had heard little as yet of monasticism, though the Eastern Church had adopted it for some time.

To the early Christians with their high ideals the world around them seemed a wicked place, in which it was difficult for them to lead a Christ-like life. They thought that by withdrawing from an atmosphere of brutality and material pleasure, and by giving themselves up to fasting and prayer, they would be able more easily to fix their minds on God and so fit themselves for Heaven. Sometimes they would go to desert places and live as hermits in caves, perhaps without talking to a living person for months or even years. Others who could not face such loneliness would join a community of monks, dwelling together under special rules of discipline. At fixed hours of the day and night they would recite the services of the Church, and in between whiles they would work or pray and study the Scriptures.

Many of the austerities they practised sound to us absurd, for it is hard to feel in sympathy with a Simon Stylites who spent the best days of his manhood crouched on a high pillar at the

mercy of sun, wind, and rain, until his limbs stiffened and withered away. Yet the hermits and monks were an arresting witness to Christianity in an age that had not fully realized what Christ's teaching meant. 'He that will serve me let him take up his cross and follow me.' This ideal of sacrifice was brought home for the first time to hundreds of thoughtless men and women when they saw some one whom they knew give up his worldly prospects and the joy of a home and children in order to lead a life of perpetual discomfort until death should come to him as a blessing not a curse. The majority of the leading clergy in the early Church, the 'Fathers of the Church', as they are usually called, were monks.

Two of them, St. Gregory and St. Basil, studied together at the University of Athens in the fourth century. St. Basil founded a community of monks in Asia Minor, where his reputation for holiness soon drew together a large number of disciples. He did not try to win them by fair words or the promise of ease and comfort, for his monks were allowed little to eat and spent their days in prayer and manual labour of the hardest kind. The Arians, who hated St. Basil as an orthodox Catholic, once threatened that they would confiscate his belongings, torture him, and put him to death. 'My sole wealth is a ragged cloak and some books,' replied the hermit calmly. 'My days on earth are but a pilgrimage, and my body is so feeble that it will expire at the first torment. Death will be a relief.' It came when he was only fifty, but not at the hands of his enemies, for he died exhausted by the penances and privations of his customary life. He left many letters and theological works that throw light on the religious questions of his day.

St. Gregory had lived for a time with St. Basil and his monks in Asia Minor but was not strong enough to submit to the same harsh discipline. Indeed he declared that but for the kindness of St. Basil's mother he would have died of starvation. Afterwards he returned home and was ordained a priest. He was a gentler type of man than St. Basil, a poet of no little merit and an eloquent preacher.

Yet another of the Catholic 'Fathers of the Church' was

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. He was elected to this see against his own will by the people of the town, who respected him because he was strong and fearless. St. Ambrose did not hesitate to use the wealth of the Church, even melting down some of the altar-vessels, to ransom Christians who had been carried away captive during one of the barbarian invasions. 'The Church,' he declared, 'possesses gold and silver not to hoard, but to spend on the welfare and happiness of men.'

The impetuosity and vigour that made him a born leader he also employed to express his intolerance of those who disagreed with him. When some Christians in Milan burned a Jewish synagogue and the Emperor Theodosius ordered them to rebuild it, St. Ambrose advised them not to do so. 'I myself,' he said, 'would have burned the synagogue. . . . What has been done is but a trifling retaliation for acts of plunder and destruction committed by Jews and heretics against the Catholics.' This was not the spirit of the Founder of Christianity: it was too often the spirit of the mediaeval Church.

A man of even greater influence than St. Ambrose of Milan was St. Jerome, a monk of the fifth century, who is chiefly remembered to-day because of his Latin translation of the Bible, 'the Vulgate' as it is called, that is still the recognized edition of the Roman Catholic Church.

St. Jerome was born in Italy, but in his extreme asceticism he followed the practices of the Eastern rather than the Western Church. As a youth he had led a wild life, but, suddenly repenting, he disappeared to live as a hermit in the desert, starving and mortifying himself. So strongly did he believe that this was the only road to Heaven that when he went to Rome he preached continually in favour of celibacy, urging men and women not to marry, as if marriage had been a sin. He was afraid that if they became happy and contented in their home life they would forget God.

Many of the leading families, and especially their women, came under St. Jerome's influence, but such exaggerated views could never be really popular and, instead of being chosen Bishop of Rome as he had expected, he was forced, by the

many enemies he had aroused, to leave the town, and returned once more to the desert. Of his sincerity there can be little doubt, but his outlook on life was warped because, like so many good and earnest contemporary Christians, he believed that human nature and this earth were entirely bad and that only by the suppression of any enjoyment in them could the soul obtain salvation.

Several centuries were to pass before St. Francis of Assisi taught his fellow men the beauty and value of what is human.

Constantinople (the *Polis* or city of Constantine) had been a Greek colony under the name of Byzantium long before Rome existed. Built on the headland of the Golden Horn, its walls were lapped by an inland sea whose depth and smoothness made a splendid harbour from the rougher waters of the Mediterranean. Almost impregnable in its fortifications, it frowned on Asia across the narrow straits of the Hellespont and completely commanded the entrance to the Black Sea, with its rich ports, markets then as now for the corn and grain of southern Russia.

Constantine, when he decided that Byzantium should be his capital, was well aware of these advantages. He had been born in the Balkans, had spent a great part of his life as a soldier in Asia, had assumed the imperial crown in Britain, and ruled Gaul for his first kingdom. This medley of experience left little place in his heart for Italy, and the name of Rome had no power to stir his blood. Rome to him was a corrupt town in one of the outlying limbs of his Empire: it had no harbour nor special military value on land, while the Alps were a barrier preventing news from passing quickly to and fro. Byzantium, on the other hand, near the mouth of the Danube, was easy of access and yet could be rendered almost impregnable to his foes. It had the great military advantage also of serving as an admirable headquarters for keeping watch over the northern frontier and an outlook towards the East.

The walls of the original town could not embrace the Emperor's ambitions, and he himself, wand in hand, designed the boundaries. His court, following him, gasped with dismay. 'It is enough,' they urged; 'no imperial city was ever so great

before.' 'I shall go on,' replied Constantine, 'until he, the invisible guide who marches before me, thinks fit to stop.'

Not until the seven hills outside Byzantium were enclosed within his circuit was the Emperor satisfied; and then the great work of building began, and the white marble of Forum and Baths, of Palaces and Colonnades, arose to adorn the Constantinople that has ever since this time played so large a part in the history of Europe. In the new market-place, just beyond the original walls, was placed the 'Golden Milestone', a marble column within a small temple, bearing the proud inscription that here was the 'central point of the world'. Inside were statues of Constantine and Queen Helena his mother, while Rome herself and the cities of Greece were robbed of their masterpieces of sculpture to embellish the buildings of the new capital.

In May A.D. 330 Constantinople was solemnly consecrated, and the Empire kept high festival in honour of an event that few of the revellers recognized would alter the whole course of her destiny. The new capital, through her splendid strategic position, was to preserve the imperial throne with one short lapse for more than a thousand years, but this advantage was obtained at the expense of Rome, and the complete severance of the interests of the Empire in the East and West.

The Romans had never loved the Greeks, even when they most admired their art and subtle intellect, and now in the fourth century this persistent distrust was intensified when Greece usurped the glory that had been her conqueror's. In the absence of an Emperor and of the many high officials who had gone to swell the triumph of his new court, Rome set up another idol. The symbols of material glory might vanish, but the Christian faith had supplied men with fresh ideals through the teaching of the Apostles and their representatives, the Bishops.

Roman bishops claimed that the gift of grace they received at their consecration had been passed down to them by the successive laying-on of hands from St. Peter himself. 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church . . . and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

These words of Christ seemed to grant to his apostle complete authority over the souls of men ; and Christians at Rome began to ask if the power of St. Peter to 'bind and loose' had not been handed down to his successors ? If so *Il Papa*, that is, 'their father', the Pope, was undoubtedly the first bishop in Christendom, for on no other apostle had Christ bestowed a like authority.

It must not be imagined that this reasoning came like a flash of inspiration or was willingly received by all Christians. Many generations of Popes, from the days of St. Peter onwards, were regarded merely as Bishops of Rome, that is, as 'overseers' of the Church in the chief city of the Empire. They were loved and esteemed by their flock not on account of special divine authority but because they stood neither for self-interest nor for faction, but for principles of justice, mercy, and brotherhood.

Had a Roman been robbed by a fellow citizen, were there a plague or famine, was the city threatened by enemies without her walls, it was to her bishop Rome turned, demanding help and protection. Afterwards it was only natural that the one power that could and did afford these things when Emperors and Senators were far away should in time take the Emperor's place, and that the Pope should appear to Rome, and gradually as we shall see to Western Europe, God's very viceroy on earth.

To the Church in Greece, Egypt, and Asia Minor he never assumed this halo of glory. Byzantium, the great Constantinople, was the pivot on which the eastern world turned, and the Bishop of Rome with his tradition of St. Peter made no authoritative appeal. Thus far back in the fourth century the cleft had already opened between the Churches of the East and West that was to widen into a veritable chasm.

Constantine 'the Great' died in 337, and if greatness be measured by achievement he well deserves his title. Where men of higher genius and originality had failed he had succeeded, beating down with calm perseverance every object that threatened his ambitions, until at last the Christian ruler of a united empire, feared and respected by subjects and enemies alike, he passed to his rest.

V

THE INVASIONS OF THE BARBARIANS

INSTEAD of endeavouring to maintain a united empire, Constantine in his will divided up his dominions between three sons and two nephews. Before thirty years were over, however, a series of murders and civil wars had exterminated his family; and two brothers, Valentian and Valens, men of humble birth but capable soldiers, were elected as joint emperors. Valens ruled at Constantinople, his brother at Milan; and it was during this reign that the Empire received one of the worst blows that had ever befallen her.

We have already mentioned the Goths, a race of barbarians half-civilized by Roman influence and converted to Christianity by followers of Arius. One of their tribes, the Visigoths, had settled in large numbers in the country to the north of the Danube. On the whole their relations with the Empire were friendly, and it was hardly their fault that the peace was finally broken, but rather of a strange Tartar race the Huns, that, massing in the plains of Asia, had suddenly swept over Europe. Here is a description given of the Huns by a Gothic writer: 'Men with faces that can scarcely be called faces, rather shapeless black collops of flesh with tiny points instead of eyes: little in stature but lithe and active, skilful in riding, broad-shouldered, hiding under a barely human form the ferocity of a wild beast.'

Tradition says that these monsters, mounted on their shaggy ponies, rode women and children under foot and feasted on human flesh. Whether this be true or no, their name became a terror to the civilized world, and after a few encounters with them the Visigoths crowded on the edge of the Danube and implored the Emperor to allow them to shelter behind the line of Roman forts.

Valens, to whom the petition was made, hesitated. There was

obvious danger to his dominions in this sudden influx of a whole tribe; but on the other hand fear might madden the Visigoths into trying to cross even if he refused, and if so could he withstand them?

'All the multitude that had escaped from the murderous savagery of the Huns,' says a writer of the day, 'no less than 200,000 fighting men besides women and old men and children, were there on the river bank, stretching out their hands with loud lamentations . . . and promising that they would ever faithfully adhere to the imperial alliance, if only the boon was granted them.'

Reluctantly Valens yielded; and soon the province of Dacia was crowded with refugees; but here the real trouble began. Food must be found for this multitude, and it was evident that the local crops would not suffice. In vain the Emperor commanded that corn should be imported: the greed of officials who were responsible for carrying out this order led them to hold up large consignments, and to sell what little they allowed to pass at wholly extortionate rates. Their unwelcome guests, half-starved and fleeced of the small savings they had been able to bring with them, complained, plotted, and broke at last into open rebellion.

This treatment of the Visigoths in Dacia is one of the worst pages in the history of the Roman Empire, but it brought its own speedy punishment. The suspicion and hatred engendered by misery spread like a flame, and the barbarian forces were joined by deserters of their own race from the imperial legions and by runaway slaves until they had grown into a formidable army. Valens, forced to take steps to preserve his throne, met them on the battle-field of Adrianople, but only to suffer crushing defeat. He himself was slain, and some 40,000 of those who had served under his banner.

Never before had the imperial eagles met with such a reverse at barbarian hands, and the Visigoths after the first moment of triumph were almost alarmed at the extent of their own success. Before the frowning walls of Constantinople their courage faltered, and without attempting a siege they retreated northwards into Thrace. Gladly they came to terms with Theodosius,

Valens's successor, who, not content with regranting them the lands to the south of the Danube that they so much desired, increased his army by taking whole regiments of their best warriors into his pay.

'Lover of peace and of the Goths' is the character with which Theodosius has passed down to posterity, and during his reign the Visigoths and other northern tribes received continual marks of his favour.

One of the Gothic kings, the old chief Athanaric, went to visit him at Constantinople, and was overwhelmed by the magnificence and luxury he saw around him. 'Now do I at last behold,' he exclaimed, 'what I have often heard but deemed incredible. . . . Doubtless the Emperor is a God on earth, and he who raises a hand against him is guilty of his own blood.'

The alliance between Goth and Greek served its purpose at the moment, for by the aid of his new troops Theodosius was able to defeat the rival Emperor of Rome and to conquer Italy. When he died he left Constantinople and the East to his eldest son Arcadius, a youth of eighteen, and Rome and the West to the younger, Honorius, who was only eleven. True to his belief in barbarian ability, Theodosius selected a Vandal chief, Stilicho, to whom he had given his niece in marriage, that he might act as the boy's adviser and command the imperial forces.

Under a wise regent a nation may wait in patience for their child ruler to mature. Unfortunately, Honorius, as he grew up, belied any promise of manliness he had ever shown, languidly refusing to continue his boyish sports of riding or archery, and taking no interest save in some cocks and hens that it was his daily pleasure to feed himself. He had no affection or reverence for Rome, and finally settled in Ravenna on the Adriatic as the safest fortress in his dominions. From here he consented to sign the orders that dispatched the legions to protect his frontiers, or issued haughty manifestoes to his enemies.

So long as Stilicho lived such feebleness passed comparatively unnoticed; for the Vandal, a man of giant build and strength, possessed to the full the tireless energy and daring that the dangers of the time demanded.

Theodosius had made the Visigoths his friends; but on his death they began to chafe at the restrictions laid upon them by the imperial alliance. Arcadius was nearly as poor a creature as his younger brother, 'so inactive that he seldom spoke and always looked as though he were about to fall asleep.' The barbarians bore him no hatred, but on the other hand he could scarcely inspire their affection or fear, and so they chose a king of their own, Alaric, one of their most famous generals, and from this moment they began to think of fresh conquests and pillage.

The suggestion of sacking Constantinople was put on one side. Those massive walls against their background of sea would make it a difficult task; besides, the Visigoths argued, were there not other towns equally rich and more vulnerable? With an exultant shout that answered this question they set out on their march first towards Illyricum on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and then to the fertile plains of Italy.

Alaric and Stilicho were well matched as generals, and for years, through arduous campaigns of battles and sieges, the Vandal kept the Goth at bay. When at last death forced him to resign the challenge, it was no enemy's sword but the weapon of treachery that robbed Rome of her best defender.

Honorius, lacking in gratitude as in other virtues, had been ill pleased at the success of his armies; for wily courtiers, hoping to plant their fortunes amid another's ruin, told him that Stilicho intended to secure the imperial throne for himself and that in order to do so he would think little of murdering his royal master. Suspicion made the timid Emperor writhe with terror through sleepless nights. It seemed to him that he would never know peace of mind again until he had rid himself of his formidable commander-in-chief; and so by his orders Stilicho was put to death and Italy lay at the mercy of Alaric and his followers.

Sweeping across the Alps, the Visigoths paused at last before the gates of Rome. 'We are many in number and prepared to fight,' boldly began the ambassadors sent out from the city. 'Thick grass is easier to mow than thin,' replied Alaric.

Dropping their lofty tone, the ambassadors demanded the price of peace, and on the answer, 'Your gold and silver, your

treasures, all that you have,' they exclaimed in horror, 'What then do you leave us?' 'Your souls,' was the mocking rejoinder.

After much argument the Visigoths consented to be bought off and retreated northwards, but it was only to return in the summer of the year 410, when Rome after a feeble resistance opened her gates. Her enemies poured in triumph through the streets; but Alaric was no Hun loving slaughter for its own sake, and ordered his troops to respect human life and to spare the churches and the gold and silver vessels that rested on their altars.

He spent only a few days in sacking the city and then marched southwards, intending to invade Africa. While his army was embarking, however, he fell ill and died, and so great was his loss that all thought of the campaign was surrendered. Alaric was mourned by his people as a national hero, and, unable to bear the thought that his enemies might one day desecrate his tomb, they dammed up a river in the neighbourhood, and dug a grave for their general deep in its bed. When they had laid his body there, they released the stream into its old course, and so left their hero safe from insult beneath the waters.

The sack of Rome that moved the civilized world profoundly made little impression upon the young Emperor. He had named one of his favourite hens after the capital; and when a messenger, haggard with the news he had brought, fell on his knees, gasping, 'Sire, Rome has perished,' Honorius only frowned, and replied, 'Impossible! I fed her myself this morning.'

St. Jerome, in his hermit's cell at Bethlehem, was stupefied at the fate of the 'Eternal City'. 'The world crumbles,' he said. 'There is no created work that rust or age does not consume: but Rome! Who could have believed that, raised by her victories above the universe, she would one day fall?'

Why had Rome fallen? This was the question on everybody's lips. We know to-day that the process of her corruption had been working for centuries; but men and women rarely see what is going on around them, and some began to murmur that

the old gods of Olympus were angry because their religion had been forsaken. It was affirmed that Christ would save the world, but what had He done to save Rome?

Christianity was not long in finding a champion to defend her cause—an African monk, Augustine, to mediaeval minds the greatest of all the 'Fathers of the Church'. Augustine was the son of a pagan father and a Christian mother and grew up a wild and undisciplined boy. After some years at the University of Carthage, spent in casual study and habitual dissipation, he determined to go to Rome, and from there passed to Milan, where he went out of curiosity to listen to the preaching of St. Ambrose. It was obvious that he would either hate or be strongly influenced by this fiery old man; and in truth Augustine, who secretly repented of the way he had wasted his life, was in a ripe mood to receive the message that he had refused to hear from the lips of Monica his mother. Soon he was converted and baptized, and later he was made Bishop of Hippo, a place not far from Carthage.

It is difficult to give a picture of Augustine in a few words. Like St. Ambrose and others of the early 'Fathers' he was quite intolerant of heresy and believed that ordinary human love and the simplest pleasures of the world were snares set by the devil to catch the unwary; but against these unbalanced views, largely the product of the age in which he lived, must be set his burning enthusiasm for God, and the services that he rendered to Christianity.

A modern writer says of him, 'As the supreme man of his time he summed up the past as it still lived, remoulded it, added to it from himself, and gave it a new unity and form wherein it was to live on.... The great heart, the great mind, the mind led by the heart's inspiration, the heart guided by the mind—this is Augustine.'

Superior in intellect to other men of his day, his whole being filled with the love of God and fired by the desire to make the world share his worship, he preached, worked, and wrote only to this end. In his *Confessions* he describes his youth and repentance; but his most famous work is his *Civitas Dei.*

Here was the answer to those who declared that Rome had fallen because she neglected her pagan deities. Rome, he maintained, was not and never could be eternal; for the one eternal kingdom was the *Civitas Dei*, or 'City of God', towards whose reign of triumph the human race had been tending since earliest times. Before her glory the kingdoms of this world, and all the culture and civilization of which men boasted, must fade away. Thus God had destined; and St. Augustine exerted all his eloquence and powers of reasoning to prove from history the magnitude and sureness of the divine purpose.

The author of the *Civitas Dei* was to have his faith severely tested, for he died amid scenes of desolation and horror that held out no hope of happiness for man on earth. Rome stood at the mercy of barbarians, and Christian Africa was also fast falling under their yoke. These new invaders, the Vandals, were also a German tribe, who, as soon as Stilicho withdrew legions from the Rhine to defend Italy from the Visigoths, broke over the weakened frontier into Gaul, and from there crossed the Pyrenees and marched southwards.

Spain had been one of the richest of Rome's provinces, and besides her minerals and corn had provided the Empire with not a few rulers as well as famous authors and poets. In her commercial prosperity she had grown, like her neighbours, corrupt and unwarlike, so that the Vandals met with little resistance and plundered and pillaged at their will. Instead of settling down amid their conquests they were driven by the promise of further loot and the pressure of other barbarian tribes following hard on their heels to cross the narrow Strait of Gibraltar and to pursue their way due east along the African coast. In Spain they have left the memory of their presence in the name of one of her fairest provinces, Andalusia.

The chief of the Vandals at this time was Genseric, who not only conquered all the coast-line of North Africa, but also built a fleet that became the terror of the Mediterranean. Like the Goths the Vandals were Christians, but they held the views of Arius and there could be little hope that they would tolerate the

orthodox Catholics. Though hardly as inhuman and ruthless as their opponents would have had the world believe, they pillaged and laid waste as they passed; and posterity has since applied the word *vandal* to the man who wilfully destroys.

The name 'Hun' is of even more sinister repute. In the first half of the fifth century the Huns in their triumphant march across Europe were led by their king, Attila, 'the Scourge of God', whose boast it was that never grass grew again where his horse's hoofs had once trod. So short and squat as to be almost deformed, flat-nosed, with a swarthy skin and deep-set eyes, that he would roll hideously when angered, the King loved to inspire terror not only amongst his enemies but in the chieftains under his command. Pity, gentleness, civilization, such words were either unknown or abhorrent to him; and in the towns whose walls were stormed by his troops, old men, women, priests, and children fell alike victims to his sword.

It was his ambition that the name of 'Attila' should become a terror to the whole earth, but the extent to which he succeeded in realizing this aim brought a serious check to his arms; for when he reached the boundaries of Gaul, he found that fear had gathered into a single hostile force of formidable size races that had warred for centuries amongst themselves. Here were not only 'Provincials', descendants of the Romanized inhabitants of Gaul, but Goths, Franks, Burgundians, and other tribes who, like the Vandals, had forced the passage of the Rhine as soon as the imperial garrisons were weakened or withdrawn. They had little in common save hatred of the Hun, a passion so strong that in a desperate battle on the plain of Chalons they hurled back the Tartar hordes for ever from the lands of Western Europe.

Shaken by his defeat, but sullen and vindictive, Attila turned his thoughts to Italy; and he and his warriors swept across the passes of the Alps and descended on the fertile country lying to the north-west of the Adriatic. The Italians made but a feeble resistance, and the palaces, baths, and amphitheatres of once wealthy towns vanished in smoking ruins.

One important work of construction Attila unconsciously

assisted, for the inhabitants of Aquileia, seeking a refuge from their cruel foe, fled to the coast, and there amid the desolate lagoons they and their descendants built for themselves in the course of centuries a new city, Venice, the future 'Queen of the Adriatic'. Aquileia had been a city of repute, but it can be safely guessed that she would never have attained the world-wide glory that Venice, safe behind her barrier of marshes and with every incentive to naval enterprise, was to establish in the Middle Ages.

From the Adriatic provinces Attila passed to Rome, but refrained from sacking the city. It is said that he was uneasy because the armies of Gaul that had defeated him at Chalons still hung on his rear, threatening to cut off his retreat across the Alps. At any rate, he consented to make terms negotiated by the Pope on behalf of the citizens of Rome. Contemporary accounts declare that the Hun was awed by the sight of Leo I in his priestly robes and by the fearlessness of his bearing, and certainly for his mediation he well deserved the title of 'Great' that the people in their gratitude bestowed on him.

Attila, when he left Rome, turned northwards, but died quite shortly after some drunken orgy. The kingdom of massacre and fire that he had built on the terror of his name fell rapidly to pieces, and only the remembrance of that terror remained; while Huns merged themselves in the armies of other tribes or fought together in petty rivalry.

Rome had been taken by Alaric the Visigoth and spared by Attila, but her trials were not yet at an end. Genseric, the Vandal king, who had established himself at Carthage, was only awaiting his opportunity to plunder a city that was still a world-famous treasure house. His fleet, that had cut off Italy entirely from the cornfields of Egypt, blockaded the mouth of the Tiber, and the Romans, weakened by famine and the warfare of the past few years, quickly sued for peace.

Once more Pope Leo went as mediator to the camp of his enemies; but the Arian Vandal, unlike the pagan Hun, was adamant. He was willing to forgo a general massacre but nothing further, and for a fortnight the city was ruthlessly

pillaged. Then Genseric sailed away, carrying with him thousands of prisoners besides all the treasures of money and art on which he could lay hands. Nearly four hundred years before, the Emperor Titus, when he sacked Jerusalem, brought to Rome the golden altar and candlesticks of the Jewish Temple, and now Rome in her turn was despoiled of these trophies of her former victories.

It was little wonder if the Western emperors, who had systematically failed to save their capital, became discredited at last among their own troops, and Rome, that had begun life according to tradition under a 'Romulus', was to end her Empire under another, a handsome boy, nicknamed in derision of his helplessness 'Augustulus', or 'little Augustus'.

The pretext of his deposition was his refusal to grant Italian lands to the German troops who formed the main part of the imperial army, on which their captain, Odoacer, compelled him to abdicate. So low had the imperial dignity sunk in public estimation that Odoacer, instead of claiming the once-coveted honour, sent the diadem and purple robe to the Emperor at Constantinople. 'We disclaim the necessity or even the wish', wrote Augustulus, 'of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy. . . . The majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and protect at the same time both East and West.'

The writer, so fortunate in his insignificance that no one wished to assassinate him, spent the rest of his days in a castle by the Mediterranean, supported by a revenue from the state; while Odoacer, with the title of 'Patrician', ruled the land with statesmanlike moderation for fourteen years.

Two more waves of invasion were yet to break across the Alps and hinder all attempts at restoration and unity. The first was that of the 'Ostrogoths', or 'Eastern' Goths, a tribe of the same race as the Visigoths that, meeting the first onslaught of the Huns in their advance from Asia, had only just on the death of Attila freed themselves from this terrible yoke. They sought now an independent kingdom, and under the leadership of their prince, Theodoric, chafed on the boundaries of the Eastern Empire, with which they had formed an alliance.

Theodoric had been educated in Constantinople, and though brave and warlike did not share the reckless love of battle that animated his followers. He realized, however, that he must lead the Ostrogoths to a new land of plenty or incur their hatred and suspicion, so he appealed to the Emperor Zeno for leave to go to Italy as his general and depose Odoacer. 'Direct me with the soldiers of my nation,' he wrote, 'to march against the tyrant. If I fall you will be relieved from an expensive and troublesome friend; if, with divine permission, I succeed, I shall govern in your name and to your glory.'

Zeno had not been sufficiently powerful to prevent Odoacer from taking the title of 'Patrician', but he had never liked the 'barbarian upstart' who had dared to depose an emperor. He had also begun to dread the presence of the restless Ostrogoths so close to Constantinople, and warmly appreciated Theodoric's arguments in favour of their exodus. If the two barbarian kings destroyed one another, it would be all the better for the Empire, and so with the imperial blessing Theodoric started on his great adventure.

He took with him not only his warriors but the women and children of his tribe and all their possessions; and after several battles succeeded in defeating and slaying his opponent. Rome, that looked upon him as the Emperor's representative, joyfully opened her gates, but Theodoric preferred to make Ravenna his capital, and here he settled and planted an orchard with his own hands.

It was his hope that he might win the trust and affection of his new subjects, and, though he ruled exactly as he liked, he remained outwardly submissive to the Emperor, writing him humble letters and marking the coinage with the imperial stamp. He frequently consulted the Senate at Rome that, though it had long ago lost any real power, had never ceased to take a nominal share in the government; and when he gave a third of the Italian lands to his own countrymen he allowed Roman officials to make the division.

Theodoric also maintained the laws and customs of Italy and forced the Ostrogoths to respect them too; but his army

remained a national bodyguard, and in spite of his efforts at conciliation the two peoples did not mingle. Between them stood the barrier of religious bitterness, for the Ostrogoths were Arians, and, though their ruler was very tolerant in his attitude, the Catholics were always suspicious of his intentions.

On one occasion there had been a riot against the Jews and several synagogues had been burned. Theodoric ordered a collection of money to be made amongst the orthodox Catholics who were responsible, that the buildings might be restored. This command was disobeyed, and when the ring-leaders of the strike were whipped through the streets, popular anger against the Gothic king grew to white heat. He himself changed in character as he became older and showed himself morose and tyrannical. Towards the end of his reign he put to death Boethius, a Roman senator, who had been one of his favourite advisers, but who had dared to defend openly a man whom he himself had condemned.

Boethius was not only a fearless champion of his friends—he was a great scholar who had kept alight the torch of classical learning amid the darkness and horror of invasion. Besides translating some of the works of Aristotle he wrote treatises on logic, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, and made an able defence of the Nicene Creed against Arian attacks. The last and most famous of his works, that for ten centuries men have remembered and loved, was his *Consolations of Philosophy*, written when death in a most horrible form was already drawing close. Tortured by a cord drawn closely round his forehead, and then beaten with clubs, the philosopher escaped from a life where fortune had dealt with him cruelly. His master survived him by two years, repenting on his death-bed in an agony of remorse the brutal sentence he had meted out.

It is scarcely fair to judge Theodoric by the tyranny of his last days. It is better to recall the glory of his prime, and how 'in the Western part of the Empire there was no people who refused him homage'. Allied by family ties with the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Franks, he was undoubtedly the greatest of all the barbarians of his age. Had his successors

shown a little of his statesmanlike qualities, Ostrogoth and Italian, in spite of their religious differences, might have united to form a single nation, but unfortunately, before twenty years had passed, the kingdom he had founded was destined to disappear.

Theodoric was succeeded by his grandson, a boy who lived only a few years, and then by a worthless nephew, without either royal or statesmanlike qualities. In contrast to this weak dynasty, there ruled at Constantinople an Emperor who possessed in the highest degree the ability and steadfastness of purpose that the times required.

Justinian was only a peasant by birth, but he had been well educated and took a keen interest not only in questions of law and finance that concerned the government but in theology, music, and architecture. In his manner to his subjects he was friendly though dignified, but there was something unsympathetic in his nature that prevented him from becoming popular. His courtiers regarded his industry with awe, but some professed to believe that he could not spend so many midnight hours at work unless he were an evil spirit not requiring sleep. One writer says that 'no one ever remembered him young': yet this serious prince married for love a beautiful actress, Theodora, and dared, in the face of general indignation, to make her his empress. An historian of the time says of Theodora, 'it were impossible for mere man to describe her comeliness in words or imitate it in art'; yet she was no doll, but took a very definite share in the government, extorting admiration by her dignity even from those who had pretended to despise her.

Justinian's chief passion was for building, and he spent a great part of his revenue in erecting bridges, baths, forts, and palaces. Most famous of all the architecture of his time was Saint Sophia, 'the Church of the Holy Wisdom', that after Constantinople passed into the hands of the Turks became a mosque.

It is not, however, for Saint Sophia that Justinian is chiefly remembered but for the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, literally 'the body of Civil Law', that he published in order that his subjects might know what the Roman law really was. The *Corpus Juris Civilis* consisted of three parts—the 'Code', a collection

of decrees made by various emperors; next the 'Digest', the decisions of eminent lawyers; and thirdly the 'Institutes', an explanation of the principles of Roman law. 'After thirteen centuries,' says a modern writer, 'it stands unsurpassed as a treasury of legal knowledge;' and all through the Middle Ages men were to look to it for inspiration. Thus it was on the *Corpus Juris Civilis* that ecclesiastical lawyers based the Canon law that gave to the Pope an emperor's power over the Church.

Justinian worked for the progress of the world when he codified Roman law. It was unfortunate that military ambition led him to exhaust his treasury and overtax his subjects, in order that he might establish his rule over the whole of Europe like Theodosius and Constantine. Besides carrying on an almost continuous war with the King of Persia, he sent an army and fleet under an able general, Belisarius, to fight against the Vandals in North Africa; and so successful was this campaign that Justinian became master of the whole coast-line, and even of a part of southern Spain. This gave him command of the Mediterranean, and he at once determined to overthrow the feeble descendants of Theodoric, and to restore the imperial dominion over Italy in deed, not as it had been from the time of Odoacer merely in name.

The task was not easy, for the Italians, as we have noticed, did not love the Greeks, while the Goths fought bravely for independence. At length, in the year 555, after nineteen campaigns, Narses, an Armenian who was at the head of Justinian's forces, succeeded in crushing the Barbarians and established his rule at Ravenna, from which city, under the title of *Exarch*, he controlled the whole peninsula.

Narses' triumph had been in a great measure due to a German tribe, 'The Lombards', whose hosts he had enrolled under the imperial banner. These Lombards, *Longobardi* or 'Long Beards' as the name originally stood, had migrated from the banks of the Elbe to the basin of the Danube, and there, looking about them for a warlike outlet for their energies, were quite as willing to invade Italy at Justinian's command as to go on any other campaign that promised to be profitable.

Narses, as soon as he was assured of success, paid them liberally for their services and sent them back to their own people; but the Lombards had learned to love the sunny climate and the vines growing out of doors, and were soon discontented with their bleaker homeland. They waited therefore until Narses, whom they knew and feared, was dead; and then, under the leadership of Alboin, their king, crossed over the Alps and invaded North Italy. They did not come in such tremendous strength as the Ostrogoths in the past, nor were the imperial troops powerless to stand against them: indeed, the two forces were so balanced that, while the Lombards succeeded in establishing themselves in the province of Lombardy, to which they gave their name, with Pavia as its capital, the representatives of the Emperor still held the coast-line on both sides, also Ravenna, Naples, Rome, and other principal towns.

This Lombard inroad, the last of the great Barbarian invasions of Italy, was by far the most important in its effects. For one thing, two hundred years were to pass before the power of the new settlers was seriously shaken; and therefore, even the fact that they were pagans and imposed their own laws ruthlessly on the Italians could not keep the races from gradually intermingling. In time the higher civilization conquered, and the fair-haired Teutons learned to worship the Christian God, forgot their own tongue, and adopted the customs and habits they saw around them. The Italians, on their part, in the course of their struggles with the Lombards became trained in the art of war they had almost forgotten. By the eighth century the fusion was complete.

Another very interesting and important result of the Lombard invasion was that the prolonged duel between Barbarians and Greeks prevented the development of any common form of government. There might in time emerge an Italian race, but there could be no Italian nation so long as towns and provinces were dominated by rulers whose policy and ambitions were utterly opposed. The *Exarch* of Ravenna claimed, in the name of the Emperor at Constantinople, to collect taxes from and administer the whole peninsula, but in practice he often ruled

merely the strip of land round his city cut off from other Greek officials by Lombard dukes. He would be able to communicate by sea with the important towns on or near the coast, such as Naples, but so irregularly that their governments would tend to grow every year more independent of his control. In Rome, for instance, there was not only the Senate with its traditions of government, but the Pope, who even more than the Senate had become the protector and adviser of his fellow citizens.

We have seen how Leo 'the Great' persuaded Attila the Hun to withdraw when his armies threatened the very gates of Rome, while later he went on a like though unavailing mission to Genseric the Vandal. It was acts like these that won recognition for the Papacy amongst other rulers; and more than any of the Popes before him, Gregory 'the Great', who ascended the chair of Peter in A.D. 590, built up the foundations of this authority.

A Roman of position and wealth, Gregory had become in middle age a poor monk, giving all his money to the poor and disciplining himself by fasting and penance. He is remembered best in England to-day for the interest he showed in the fair-haired Angles in the Roman slave-market. 'They have Angels' faces, they should be fellow-heirs of the Angels in Heaven.' His comment he followed up by a petition that he might sail as a missionary to the northern island from which these slaves came; and, when instead he was sent on an embassy to Constantinople, he did not forget England in the years that passed, but after he became Pope, chose St. Augustine to go and convert the heathen King of Kent. In this way southern England was christianized and brought into touch with the life of Western Europe.

'A great Pope,' it has been said, 'is always a missionary Pope.' Gregory had the true missionary's enthusiasm, and his writings, all of them theological, bear the stamp of St. Augustine of Hippo's ardent spirit enforced with a faith absolutely assured and unbending. Besides being instrumental in converting England, Gregory during his pontificate saw the Arian Church in Spain reconciled to the Catholic, while he succeeded in winning the Lombard king to Christianity and friendship.

It was little wonder that the people of Rome, who had been at war with these invaders for long years, looked up to the peace-maker not only as their spiritual father but also as a temporal ruler. Had he not fed them when they were starving, declaring that it was thus the Church should use her wealth? Had he not raised soldiers to guard the walls and sent out envoys to plead the city's cause against her enemies? There was no such practical help to be obtained from the Exarchs of Ravenna, talk as they might about the glories of Constantinople. Thus Romans argued, and Gregory, who knew the real weakness of Constantinople, was able to disregard the imperial viceroys when he chose, a policy of independence followed by his successors.

Since the Lombard kingdom had split up into a number of duchies each with its own capital, Italy, in the early Middle Ages, tended to become a group of city states, each jealous of its neighbours and ambitious only for local interests. This provincial influence was so strong that it has lasted into modern times. An Englishman or a Frenchman will claim his country before thinking of the particular part from which he comes, but it is more natural for an Italian to say first 'I am Roman,' or 'Neapolitan,' or 'Florentine,' as the case may be. It is only by remembering this difference that Italian history can be read aright.

Supplementary Dates. For Chronological Summary, see pp. 368 73.

	A. D.
The Emperors Valentian and Valens	364
Battle of Adrianople	378
The Emperor Theodosius	379-95
Vandal Invasion of Africa	441
Battle of Chalons	451
Huns invade Italy	452
Pope Leo I 'the Great'	440

VI

THE RISE OF THE FRANKS

THE historian Tacitus, whose description of the German tribes we have already quoted, had told the people of Gaul that, unless these same Germans were kept at bay by the Roman armies on the Rhine frontier, they would 'exchange the solitude of their woods and morasses for the wealth and fertility of Gaul'. 'The fall of Rome,' he added, 'would be fatal to the provinces, and you would be buried in the ruins of that mighty fabric.'

This prophetic warning proved only too true when Vandal and Visigoth, Burgundian, Hun, and Frank forced the passage of the Rhine, and swept in irresistible masses across vineyards and cornfields, setting fire to those towns and fortresses that dared to offer resistance. The Vandal migration was but a meteor flash on the road to Spain and North Africa; while on the battle-field of Chalons the Huns were beaten back and carried their campaign of bloodshed to Italy: but the other three tribes succeeded in establishing formidable kingdoms in Gaul during the fifth and sixth centuries.

At the head of the Visigoths rode Athaulf, brother-in-law of Alaric, unanimously chosen king by the tribe on the death of that mighty warrior.[1] Instead of continuing the campaign in South Italy, Athaulf had made peace with the Emperor Honorius and married his sister, thus gaining a semi-royal position in the eyes of Roman citizens.

'I once aspired,' he said frankly, 'to obliterate the name of Rome and to erect on its ruins the dominion of the Goths, but . . . I was gradually convinced that laws are essentially necessary to maintain and regulate a well-constituted state. . . . From that moment, I proposed to myself a different object of

See p. 41.

glory and ambition; and it is now my sincere wish that the gratitude of future ages should acknowledge the merits of a stranger, who employed the sword of the Goths, not to subvert, but to restore and maintain the prosperity of the Roman Empire.'

Fortified by such sentiments and the benediction of the Emperor, who was glad to free Italy from his brother-in-law's presence, Athaulf succeeded, after a short struggle, in establishing a Visigothic kingdom in southern Gaul, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Bay of Biscay. This, under his successors, was enlarged until it embraced the whole of the province of Aquitania, with Toulouse as its capital, as well as both slopes of the Pyrenees.

The Burgundians, another German tribe, had, in the meanwhile, built up a middle kingdom along the banks of the Rhone. Years of intercourse with the Romans had done much to civilize both their manners and thoughts, and they were quite prepared to respect the laws and customs that they found in Gaul so long as they met with no serious opposition to their rule. The fact that both Burgundians and Visigoths were Arians raised, however, a fatal barrier between conquerors and conquered, and did more than anything else to determine that ultimate dominion over the whole of Gaul should be the prize of neither of these races, but of a third Teutonic tribe, the Salian Franks, whom good fortune placed beyond the influence of heresy.

The Franks were a tall, fair-haired, loose-limbed people, who, emerging from Germany, had settled for a time in the country we now call Belgium. Like their ancestors, they worshipped Woden and other heathen gods of the Teutons, while in their Salic law we see much to recall the German customs described by Tacitus five centuries before.

The king was no longer elected by his people, for his office had become hereditary in the House of Meroveus, one of the heroes of the race. No woman, even of the Merovingian line, might succeed to the throne, nor prince whose hair had been shorn, since with the Franks flowing locks were a sign of royalty. Yet, in spite of the king's new position, the old spirit of equality

had not entirely disappeared. The assembly of freemen, still held once a year, had degenerated into a military review: but the warriors thus collected could demand that the coming campaign should meet with their approval. When a battle was over and victory obtained, the lion's share of the booty did not fall to the king, but the whole was divided by lot.

A great part of the Salic law was really a tariff of violent acts, with the fine that those who had committed them must pay, so much for shooting a poisoned arrow, even if it missed its mark; so much for wounding another in the head, or for cutting off his nose, or his great toe, or, worst of all, for damaging his second finger, so that he could no longer draw the bowstring.

The underlying principle of this code was different from that of the Roman law, which set up a certain standard of right, inflicting penalties on those who fell short of it. Thus the Roman citizen who murdered or maimed his neighbour would be punished because he had dared to do what the state condemned as a crime. The Frank, in a similar case, would be fined by the judges of his tribe, and the money paid as compensation to the person, or the relations of the person, whom he had wronged: the idea being, not to appease the anger of the state, but to remove the resentment of the injured party.

For this purpose each Frank had his *wergeld*, literally his 'worth-gold' or the sum of money at which, according to his rank, his life was valued, beginning with the nobles of the king's palace and descending in a scale to the lowest freeman. When the Franks left Belgium and advanced, conquering, into northern Gaul, they also fixed *wergelds* for their Roman subjects; but rated them at only half the value of their own race. The *wergeld* of a Frankish freeman was two hundred gold pieces, of a Roman only one hundred.

By the beginning of the sixth century, when the Franks were well established in Gaul, the management of their important tribal affairs had passed entirely into the hands of the nobles surrounding the king. These bore such titles as *Major Domus* or 'Mayor of the Palace', at first only a steward, but later the chief minister of the crown; the 'Seneschal' or head of the

royal household; the 'Marshal' or Master of the Stables; the 'Chamberlain' or chief servant of the bedchamber.

The most famous of the Merovingian kings, as the descendants of Merovius were called, was Clovis, who established the Frankish capital at Paris. He and his tribe, though pagans, were on friendly terms with the Roman inhabitants of northern Gaul, and especially with some of the Catholic clergy. When Clovis sacked the town of Soissons he tried to save the church plate, and especially a vase of great beauty that he knew St. Remi, Bishop of Reims, highly valued. 'Let it be put amongst my booty,' he said to his soldiers, intending to give it to the bishop later; but one of them answered him insolently, 'Only that is thine which falls to thy share by lot,' and with his axe he shivered the vase into a thousand pieces.

Clovis concealed his fury at the moment, but he did not forget, and a year afterwards, when he was reviewing his troops, he noticed the same man who had opposed his will. Stepping forward, he tore the fellow's weapons from his grasp and threw them on the ground, saying, 'No arms are worse cared for than thine!' The soldier stooped to pick them up, and Clovis, raising his battle-axe high in the air, brought it down on the bent head before him with the comment, 'Thus didst thou to the vase at Soissons!'

Clovis married a Christian princess, Clotilda, a niece of the Burgundian king, and, at her request, he allowed their eldest child to be baptized, but for a long time he refused to become a Christian himself. One day, however, when in the midst of a battle in which his warriors were so hard pressed that they had almost taken to flight, he cried aloud—'Jesus Christ, thou whom Clotilda doth call the Son of the Living God . . . I now devoutly beseech thy aid, and I promise if thou dost give me victory over these my enemies . . . that I will believe in thee and be baptized in thy name, for I have called on my own gods and they have failed to help me.'

Shortly afterwards the tide of battle turned, the Franks rallied, and Clovis obtained a complete victory. Remembering his promise, he went to Reims, and there he and three thousand of

his warriors were received into the Catholic Church. 'Bow thy head low,' said St. Remi who baptized the King, 'henceforth adore that which thou hast burned and burn that which thou didst formerly adore.'

When he became a Catholic, Clovis had no idea that he had altered the whole future of his race, for to him it seemed merely that he had fulfilled the bargain he had made with the Christian God. He did not change his ways, but pursued his ambitions as before, now by treachery and now by force. It was his determination to make himself supreme ruler over all the Franks, and in the case of another branch, the Ripuarians, he began by secretly persuading their heir to the kingly title, the young prince Chloderic, to kill his father and seize the royal coffers.

Chloderic, fired by the idea of becoming powerful, did so and wrote exultingly to Clovis, 'My father is dead and his wealth is mine. Let some of thy men come hither, and that of his treasure which pleaseth them I will send thee.'

Ambassadors from the Salians duly arrived, and Chloderic led them secretly apart and showed them his money, running his hand through the pieces of gold that lay on the surface of the coffer. The men begged him to thrust his arm in deep that they might judge how great his wealth really was, and as he bent to do so, one of them struck him a mortal wound from behind. Then they fled. Thus by treachery died both father and son; but Clovis unblushingly denied to the Ripuarian Franks that he had been in any way responsible.

'Chloderic murdered his father, and he hath been assassinated by I know not whom. I am no partner in such deeds, for it is against the law to take the life of relations. Nevertheless, since it has happened, I offer you this advice, that you should put yourselves under my protection.'

The Ripuarian Franks were without a leader, and like all barbarians they worshipped success; so, believing that Clovis would surely lead them to victory, they raised him on their shields and hailed him as king.

'Each day God struck down the enemies of Clovis under his

hand,' says Bishop Gregory of Tours, describing these events, 'and enlarged his kingdom, because he went with an upright heart before the Lord and did the things that were pleasing in His sight.' It is startling to find a bishop pass such a verdict on a career of treachery and murder, the more that Gregory of Tours was no cringing court-flatterer but a priest with a high sense of duty who dared, when he believed it right, to oppose some of the later Frankish kings even at the risk of his life. Yet it must be remembered that a sense of honour was not understood by barbarians, except in a very crude form. They believed it was clever to outwit their neighbours, while to murder them was so ordinary as to excite little or no comment, save the infliction of a *wergeld* if the crime could be brought home. Centuries of the civilizing influence of Christianity were needed before the men and women of these fierce tribes could accept the Christian principles of truth, justice, and mercy in anything like their real spirit.

The Romans in Gaul had almost given up expecting anything but brutality from their invaders if they aroused their enmity, and therefore welcomed even the smallest sign of grace. Thus the protection that Clovis afforded to the Catholic Church, after her years of persecution, blinded their eyes to many of his vices.

When Clovis had made himself master of the greater part of northern Gaul, he determined to strike a blow at the Visigoths in the south. 'It pains me,' he said to his followers, 'to see Arians in a part of Gaul. Let us march against these heretics with God's aid and gain their country for ourselves.'

Probably he was sincere in his dislike of heresy, but it was a politic attitude to adopt, for it meant that wherever he and his warriors marched they would find help against the Burgundians and Visigoths amongst the orthodox Roman population. It seemed to the latter that Clovis brought with him something of the glory of the vanished Roman Empire, kept alive by the Catholic Church and now revived through her in this her latest champion.

In a fierce battle near Poitiers, Clovis defeated the Visigoths and drove them out of Aquitaine, leaving them merely narrow

strips of territory along the Mediterranean seaboard and on either slope of the Pyrenees. He also fought against the Burgundians and, though he was not so successful, reduced them temporarily to submission. When he died, at the age of forty-five, he was master of three-quarters of Gaul, and had stamped the name of his race for ever on the land he had invaded.

His work of conquest was continued by his successors and reached its zenith in the time of King Dagobert, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century. Dagobert has been called 'the French Solomon', because, like the Jewish king, he was world-famed for his wisdom and riches. Not content with maintaining his power over Gaul to the west of the Rhine, he fought against the Saxon and Frisian tribes in Germany and forced them to pay tribute. At last his Empire stretched from the Atlantic to the mountains of Bohemia; the Duke of Brittany, who had hitherto remained independent of the Franks, came to offer his allegiance, while the Emperor of Constantinople sought a Frankish alliance.

A chronicler of the day, speaking of Dagobert, says, 'He was a prince terrible in his wrath towards traitors and rebels. He held the royal sceptre firmly in his grasp, and like a lion he sprang upon those who would foment discord.'

Another account describes his journeys through his kingdom, and how he administered justice with an even hand, not altogether to the joy of tyrannical landowners. 'His judgements struck terror into the hearts of the bishops and of the great men, but it overwhelmed the poor with joy.'

In the troublous years that were to come his reign stood out in people's minds as an age of prosperity, but already, before the death of the king, this prosperity had begun to wane. Luxury sapped the vigour of a once-powerful mind and body, and the authority that 'the French Solomon' relaxed in his later years through self-indulgence was never regained by his successors.

With the contemptuous title 'The Sluggard Kings' the last rulers of the Merovingian line have passed down to posterity. Few were endowed with any ability or even ambition to govern, the majority died before they had reached manhood looking

already like senile old men; and the power that should have been theirs passed into the hands of the Mayors of the Palace who administered their demesnes. On state occasions, indeed, they were still shown to their subjects, as they jolted to the place of assembly in a rough cart drawn by oxen; but the ceremony over, they returned to their royal villas and insignificance. 'Nothing was left to the king save the name of king, the flowing locks, the long beard. He sat on his throne and played at government, gave audiences to envoys, and dismissed them with the answers with which he had been schooled.'

It was a situation that could only last so long as the name 'Meroveus' retained its spell over the Franks; but the day came when the spell was broken, and a race of stronger fibre, the Carolingians, usurped the royal title. The heads of this family had for generations held the office of 'Mayor of the Palace' in the part of Gaul between the Meuse and the Lower Rhine, then called Austrasia. It was their duty to administer the royal demesnes in this large district, that is, to see that the laws were obeyed, to superintend the cultivation of the soil, and to collect a share of the various harvests as a revenue for the king.

This was more important work than it may sound to modern ears; for in the early Middle Ages the majority of people, unlike men and women to-day, lived in the country. Ever since the decay of the Roman Empire, when the making of roads was neglected and the imperial grain-fleets disappeared from the Mediterranean, the problem of carrying merchandise and food from one part of Europe to another had grown steadily more acute. As commerce and industry languished, towns ceased to be centres of population and became merely strongholds where the neighbourhood could find refuge when attacked by its enemies. People preferred to spend their ordinary life in villages in the midst of fields, where they could grow corn and barley, or keep their own sheep and oxen, and if the crops failed or their beasts were smitten by disease a whole province might suffer starvation.

The Mayor of the Palace must guard the royal demesnes,

as far as possible, from the ravages of weather, wolves, or lawless men, for the King of the Franks, as much as any of his subjects, depended on the harvests and herds for his prosperity rather than on commerce or manufactures. By the end of the seventh century the Mayors of Austrasia had ceased to interest themselves merely in local affairs and had begun to extend their authority over the whole of France. Nominally, they acted in the name of the Merovingian kings, but once when the throne fell vacant they did not trouble to fill it for two years. The Franks made no protest: it was to their mayors, not to their kings, that they now turned whether in search of good government or daring national exploits.

The Carolingian Charles 'Martel', Charles 'the Hammer', was a warrior calculated to arouse their profound admiration. 'He was a Herculean warrior,' says an old chronicle, 'an ever-victorious prince . . . who triumphed gloriously over other princes, and kings, and peoples, and barbarous nations: in so much that, from the Slavs to the Frisians and even to the Spaniards and Saracens, there were none who rose up against him that escaped from his hand, without prostrating themselves in the dust before his empire.'

It was Charles Martel who saved France from falling under the yoke of the Saracens, a race of Arabian warriors who, crossing from Africa at the Strait of Gibraltar, subdued in one short campaign three-quarters of Spain. Describing the first great victory over the Gothic King Rodrigo at Guadalete, the Governor of Africa wrote to his master the Caliph, 'O Commander of the Faithful, these are no common conquests; they are like the meeting of the nations on the Day of Judgement.'

Puffed up with the glory they had gained, the Saracens, who were followers of the Prophet Mahomet, believed that they had only to advance for Christian armies to run away; and over the Pyrenees they swept in large bands, seizing first one stronghold on the Mediterranean coast and then another. Before this invasion Charles Martel had been engaged in a quarrel with the Duke of Aquitaine, but now they hastily made friends and on the field of Poitiers joined their forces to stem the

Saracen tide. So terrible was the battle, we are told, that over three hundred thousand Saracens fell before the Frankish warriors 'inflexible as a block of ice'. The number is almost certainly an exaggeration, and so also is the claim that the victors, by forcing the remnant of the Mahometan army to retreat towards the Pyrenees in hasty flight, saved Europe for Christianity. Even had the decision of the battle been reversed, the Moors would have found the task of holding Spain in the years to come quite sufficient to absorb all their energies. Indeed, their attacks on Gaul were, from the first, more in the nature of gigantic raids than of invasions with a view to settlement, though at the time their ferocity made them seem of world-wide importance.

Thus it was only natural that the Mayor of the Palace, to whom the victory was mainly due, became the hero of Christendom. The Pope, who was at that time trying to defend Rome from the King of the Lombards, sent to implore his aid; but Charles knew that his forces had been weakened by their struggle with the Saracens and dared not undertake so big a campaign.

Some years later his son, Pepin 'the Short' (751–68), who had succeeded him, received the suggestion with a different answer. Pepin, as his nickname shows, was short in stature, but he was powerfully built and so strong that with a single blow of his axe he once cut off the head of a lion. Energetic and shrewd, he saw a way of turning the Pope's need of support against the Lombards to his own advantage. He therefore sent Frankish ambassadors to Rome to inquire whether it was not shameful for a land to be governed by kings who had no authority. The Pope, who was anxious to please Pepin, replied discreetly, 'He who possesses the authority should doubtless possess the title also.'

This was exactly what the Mayor of the Palace had expected and wished, and the rest of the story may be told in the words of the old Frankish annals for the year 751: 'In this year Pepin was named king of the Franks with the sanction of the Popes, and in the city of Soissons he was anointed with the holy oil . . . and was raised to the throne after the custom of the Franks. But Childeric, who had the name of king, was shorn of his locks and sent into a monastery.'

The last of the Merovingians had vanished into the oblivion of a cloister, and Pepin the Carolingian was ruler of France. With the Pope's blessing he had achieved his ambition, and fortune soon enabled him to repay his debt, mainly, as it happened, at another's expense.

In the last chapter we described the effect of the Lombard invasion of Italy, and how that Teutonic race sank its roots deep in the heart of the peninsula, leaving a Greek fringe along the coasts that still considered itself part of the Eastern Empire. Rome in theory belonged to this fringe, but in reality the Popes hated the imperial authority almost as much as the aggressions of Lombard king and dukes, and struggled to free themselves from its yoke.

When Pepin, his own ambition satisfied, turned his attention to the Pope's affairs, the Lombards had just succeeded in overrunning the Exarchate of Ravenna, the seat of the imperial government in Italy. Collecting an army, the King of the Franks crossed the Alps without encountering any opposition, marched on Pavia, the Lombard capital, and struck such terror into his enemies that, almost without fighting, they agreed to the terms that he dictated.

Legally, he should have at once commanded the restoration of the Exarchate to the Empire, but there was no particular reason why Pepin should gratify Constantinople, while he had a very strong inclination to please Rome. He therefore told the Lombards to give the Exarchate to Stephen II, who was Pope at that time, and this they faithfully promised to do; but, as he turned homewards, they began instead to oppress the country round Rome, preventing food from entering the city and pillaging churches.

Pepin was very angry when he heard the news. Once more he descended on Italy, and this time the Lombards were compelled to keep their word, and the Papacy received the first of its temporal possessions, ratified by a formal treaty that declared the exact extent of the territory and the Papal rights over it. This was an important event in mediaeval history, for it meant that henceforward the Pope, who claimed to be the spiritual

head of Christendom, would be also an Italian prince with recognized lands and revenues, and therefore with private ambitions concerning these. It would be his instinct to distrust any other ruler in the peninsula who might become powerful enough to deprive him of these lands; while he would always be faced, when in difficulties, by the temptation to use his spiritual power to further purely worldly ends. On the way in which Popes dealt with this problem of their temporal and spiritual power, much of the future history of Europe was to depend.

Pepin, in spite of his shrewdness, had no idea of the troubles he had sown by his donation. Well pleased with the generosity he had found so easy, with the title of 'Patrician' bestowed on him by the Pope, and perhaps still more by the spoils that he and his Franks had collected in Lombardy, he left Italy, and was soon engaged in other campaigns nearer home against the Saracens and rebellious German tribes. In these he continued until his death in 768.

VII

MAHOMET

CHRISTIANITY, first preached by humble fishermen in Palestine, had become the foundation of life in mediaeval Europe. Some three hundred years after Constantine the Great had made this possible another religion, 'Islam', destined to be the rival of Christianity, was also born in the East, in Arabia, a narrow strip of territory lying between the Red Sea and miles of uninhabitable desert.

On the sea-coast of Arabia were some harbours, inland a few fertile oases, where towns of low, white stone houses and mud hovels had sprung into being; but from the very nature of the soil and climate the Arabs were not drawn to manufacture goods or grow corn. Instead they preferred a wanderer's life, to tend the herds of horses or sheep that ranged the peninsula in search of water and pasturage, or if more adventurous to guard the caravans of camels that carried the silks and spices of India to Mediterranean seaports. These caravans had their regular routes, and every merchant a band of armed men to protect his goods and drive off robbers along the way. Only in the 'Sacred Months', the time of the sowing of seeds in the spring and at the autumn harvest, were such convoys of goods safe from attack; for then, and then only, every Arab believed, according to the traditions of his forefathers, that peace was a duty, and that a curse would fall on him who dared to break it.

The Arab, like all Orientals, was superstitious. He worshipped 'Allah', the all supreme God, but he accepted also a variety of other gods, heavenly bodies, spirits and devils, stones and idols. One of the most famous Arabian sanctuaries was a temple at Mecca called the 'Ka'bah', where a black stone had been built into the wall that pilgrims would come from long

distances to kiss and worship. Amongst the youths of the town who saw this ceremony and himself took part in the religious processions was an orphan lad, Mahomet (576–632), brought up in the house of his uncle, Abu Talib.

Mahomet was handsome and strong: he had looked after sheep on the edge of the desert, taken part in tribal fights, and from the age of twelve wandered with caravans as far as the sea-coast. What distinguished him from his companions was not his education, nor any special skill as a warrior, but his quickness of observation, his tenacious memory, and his gift for bending others to his will. Unable to read, he could only gain knowledge by word of mouth, and wherever he went, amongst the colonies of the Jews who were the chief manufacturers in the towns, or lying beside the camp fires of the caravans at night, he would keep his ears open and store up in his mind all the tales that he heard. In this way he learned of the Jewish religion and a garbled version of Christianity. Soon he knew the stories of Joseph and of Abraham and some of the sayings of Christ, and the more he thought over them the more he grew to hate the idol worship of the Arabs round him.

When he was twenty-five Mahomet married a rich widow, Khadijah, whose caravan he had successfully steered across the desert; and in this way he became a man of independent means, possessing camels and horses of his own. Khadijah was some years older than Mahomet, but she was a very good wife to him, and brought him not only a fortune but a trust and belief in his mission that he was to need sorely in the coming years. To her he confided his hatred of idol-worship, and also to Abu Bakr, the wealthy son of a cloth merchant of Mecca, who had fallen under his influence. Mahomet declared that God, and later the Angel Gabriel, had appeared to him in visions and had given him messages condemning the superstitions of the Arabs.

'There is but one God, Allah... and Mahomet is His Prophet.'

This was the chief message, received at first with contempt but destined to be carried triumphant in the centuries to come right to the Pyrenees and the gates of Vienna.

The visions, or trances, during which Mahomet received his

messages, afterwards collected in the sacred book, the Koran, are thought by many to have been epileptic fits. His face would turn livid and he would cover himself with a blanket, emerging at last exhausted to deliver some command or exhortation. Later it would seem that he could produce this state of insensibility at will and without much effort, whenever questions were asked, indeed, in answering which he required divine guidance. Much of the teaching in the Koran was based, like Judaism or Christianity, on far higher ideals than the fetish worship of the Arabs: it emphasized such things as the duty of almsgiving, the discipline that comes of fasting, the necessity of personal cleanliness, while it forbade the use of wine, declaring drunkenness a crime.

With regard to the position of women the Koran could show nothing of the chivalry that was to develop in Christendom through the respect felt by Christians for the mother of Christ and for the many women martyrs and saints who suffered during the early persecutions. Moslems were allowed by the Koran to have four wives (Mahomet permitted himself ten), and these might be divorced at their husband's pleasure without any corresponding right on their part. On the other hand the power of holding property before denied was now secured to women, and the murder of female children that had been a practice in the peninsula was sternly abolished.

As the years passed more and more 'Surahs', or chapters, were added to the Koran, but at first the Prophet's messages were few and appealed only to the poor and humble. When the Meccans, told by Abu Bakr that Mahomet was a prophet, came to demand a miracle as proof, he declared that there could be no greater miracle than the words he uttered; but this to the prosperous merchants seemed merely crazy nonsense. When he went farther, and, acting on what he declared was Allah's revelation, destroyed some of the local idols, contempt changed to anger; for the inhabitants argued that if 'Ka'bah' ceased to be a sanctuary their trade with the pilgrims who usually came to Mecca would cease.

For more than eight years, while the Prophet maintained his

unpopular mission, his poorer followers were stoned and beaten, and he himself shunned. Perhaps it seems odd that in such a barbarous community he was not killed; but though Arabia possessed no government in any modern sense, yet a system of tribal law existed that went far towards preventing promiscuous murder. Each man of any importance belonged to a tribe that he was bound to support with his sword, and that in turn was responsible for his life. If he were slain the tribe would exact vengeance or demand 'blood money' from the murderer. Now the head of Mahomet's tribe was Abu Talib, his uncle, and, though the old man refused to accept his nephew as a prophet, he would not allow him to be molested.

In spite of persecution the number of believers in Mahomet's doctrines grew, and when some of those who had been driven out of the city took refuge with the Christian King of Abyssinia and were treated by him with greater kindness than the pagan Arabs, the Meccans at home became so much alarmed that they adopted a new policy of aggression. Henceforward both Mahomet and his followers, the hated 'Moslems', or 'heathen' as they were nicknamed in the Syriac tongue, were to be outlaws, and no one might trade with them or give them food.

In an undisciplined community like an Arabian town such an order would not be strictly kept, and for three years Mahomet was able to defy the ban, but every day his position grew more precarious and the sufferings of his followers from hunger and poverty increased. During this time too both Khadijah and Abu Talib died, and the Prophet, almost overwhelmed with his misfortunes, was only kept from doubting his mission by the faith and loyalty of those who would not desert him.

Weary of trying to convert Mecca he sent messengers through Arabia to find if there were any tribe that would welcome a prophet, and at last he received an invitation to go to Yathrib. This was a larger town than Mecca, farther to the north, and was populated mainly by Jewish tribes who hated the Arabian idol-worshippers and welcomed the idea of a teacher whose views were based largely on Jewish traditions.

In 622, therefore, Mahomet and his followers fled secretly from

Mecca to Yathrib, later called Medinah or 'the city of the Prophet'; and this date of the 'Hijrah' or 'Flight', when the new religion broke definitely with old Arab traditions, was taken as the first year of the Moslem calendar, just as Christians reckon their time from the birth of Christ. Here in Medinah was built the first mosque, or temple of the new faith, a faith christened by its believers Islam, a word meaning 'surrender', for in surrender to Allah and to the will of his Prophet lay the way of salvation to the Moslem Garden of Paradise.

So beautiful to the Arab mind were the very material luxuries and pleasures with which Mahomet entranced the imagination of believers that in later years his soldiers would fling themselves recklessly against their enemies' spears in order to gain Paradise the quicker. The alternative for the unbeliever was Hell, the everlasting fires of the Old Testament that so terrified the minds of mediaeval Christians; and between Paradise and Hell there was no middle way.

The Jews in Medinah were, like Mahomet, worshippers of one God, but they soon showed that they were not prepared to accept this wandering Arab as Jehovah's final revelation to man. They demanded miracles, sneered at the Koran, which they declared was a parody of their own Scriptures, and took advantage of the poverty of the refugees to drive hard bargains with them. At length it became obvious that the Moslems must find some means of livelihood or else Medinah, like Mecca, must be left for more friendly soil.

Pressed by circumstances Mahomet evolved a policy that was destined to overthrow the tribal system of government in Arabia. Mention has been made already of the caravans of camels that journeyed regularly from south to north of the peninsula, bearing merchandise. Many of these caravans were owned by wealthy Meccans, whose chief trade route passed quite close by the town of Medinah, and they were protected and guarded by members of the tribe of Abu Talib and of other families whose relations were serving with the Prophet.

At first, when Mahomet commanded that these caravans should be attacked and looted, his followers looked aghast, for the

sacredness of tribes from attack by kinsmen was a tradition they had inherited for generations. Their Prophet at once proved to them by a message from Allah that a new relationship had been formed stronger than the ties of blood, namely, the bond of faith, and that to the believer the unbeliever, whether father or son, was accursed. In the same way, when the first marauding expeditions were unsuccessful because the caravans attacked were too well guarded, Mahomet explained away the 'Sacred Months' and chose in future that very time for his warriors to descend upon unsuspecting merchants.

The Meccans, outraged by what they somewhat naturally considered treachery, soon dispatched some thousand men, determined to make an end of the Prophet and his followers; and at Badr, not very far from the coast on the trade route between the two towns, this large force encountered three hundred Moslems commanded by Mahomet. It is difficult to gain a clear impression of the battle, for romance and legend have rendered real details obscure; but, either by superior generalship, the valour and discipline of the Moslems as compared to the conduct of their forces, or, as was later stated, through the agency of angels sent by Allah from Heaven, the vastly more numerous Meccan force was utterly put to rout.

Moslems refer to the battle of Badr as 'the Day of Deliverance', for though, not long afterwards, they in their turn were defeated by the Meccans, yet never again were they to become mere discredited refugees. Success pays, and, with the victory of Badr as a tangible miracle to satisfy would-be converts, Mahomet soon gained a large army of warriors, whom his personality moulded into obedience to his will.

The Jews who had mocked him had soon cause to repent, for Mahomet, remembering their jibes and the petty persecution to which they had subjected his followers, adopted a definitely hostile attitude towards them. Taking advantage of the reluctance with which these Jews had shared in the defence of Medinah and in the throwing-up of earthworks to protect it, when the Meccans came to besiege it in the year 5 of the new calendar, Mahomet as soon as the siege was raised obtained his revenge.

Those Jews of the city who still refused to recognize him as a Prophet were slaughtered, their wives and children sold into slavery. The teaching and ritual of the Koran also, once carefully based on the Scriptures of Israel, began to cast off this influence, and where of old Mahomet had commanded his followers to look towards Jerusalem in their prayers, he now bade them kneel with their faces towards Mecca.

In this command may be seen his new policy of conciliation towards his native town; for Mahomet recognized that in the city of Mecca lay the key to the peninsula, and he was determined to establish his power there, if not by force then by diplomacy. After some years of negotiation he persuaded those who had driven him into exile not so much of the truth of his teaching as of the certainty that his presence would bring more pilgrims than ever before to visit the shrine of Ka'bah.

In A.D. 630 he entered Mecca in triumph, and the worship of Islam was established in the heart of Arabia. As a concession to the Meccans, divine revelation announced that the sacred black stone built into the temple wall had been hallowed by Abraham, and was therefore worthy of veneration.

Instead of a general scheme of revenge only two of Mahomet's enemies were put to death; and it is well to remember that, judged by the standards of his age and race, the Prophet was no lover of cruelty. In his teaching he condemned the use of torture, and throughout his life he was nearly always ready to treat with his foes rather than slay them. Those amongst his enemies who refused him recognition as a Prophet while willing to acknowledge him as a ruler were usually allowed to live in peace on the payment of a yearly ransom divided amongst the believers; but in cases where he had met with an obstinate refusal or persistent treachery, as from the Jews of Medinah, Mahomet would put whole tribes to the sword.

In 632 the Prophet of Islam died, leaving a group of Arabian tribes bound far more securely together by the faith he had taught them than they could have been by the succession of any royal house. 'Though Mahomet is dead, yet is Mahomet's God not dead.'

While Mahomet was still an exile at Medinah it is evident that he already contemplated the idea of gaining the world for Islam. 'Let there be in you a nation summoning unto good,' says the Koran, and in token of this mission the Prophet, in the years following his Arabian victories, sent letters to foreign rulers to announce his ambition. Here is one to the chief of the Copts, a Christian race living in Egypt:

'In the name of Allah . . . the Merciful.

'From the Apostle of Allah to . . . , Chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance. Next I summon thee with the appeal to Islam: become a Moslem and thou shalt be safe. God shall give thee thy reward twofold. But if thou decline then on thee is the guilt of the Copts. O ye people of the Book come unto an equal arrangement between us and you that we should serve none save God, associating nothing with Him, and not taking one another for Lords besides God,—and if ye decline, then bear witness that we are Moslems.'

Similar letters were sent to Chosroes, King of Persia, and to Heraclius, the Christian Emperor at Constantinople. The former tore the letter in pieces contemptuously, for at that time his kingdom extended over the greater part of Asia; Jerusalem, once the pride of the Eastern Empire, had fallen into his grasp; while his armies were besieging Constantinople itself. A letter that he himself penned to the Christian Emperor shows his overweening pride, and the depths into which Byzantium had fallen in the public regard:

'Chosroes, Greatest of Gods, and Master of the whole earth, to Heraclius, his vile and insensate slave. Why do you still refuse to submit to our rule and call yourself a king? Have I not destroyed the Greeks? You say that you trust in your God. Why has he not delivered out of my hand Caesarea, Jerusalem, Alexandria? and shall I not also destroy Constantinople? But I will pardon your faults if you will submit to me, and come hither with your wife and children, and I will give you lands, vineyards, and olive groves, and look upon you with a kindly aspect. Do not deceive yourself with vain hope in that Christ, who was not even able to save himself from the Jews, who killed

him by nailing him to a cross. Even if you take refuge in the depths of the sea I shall stretch out my hand and take you, so that you shall see me whether you will or no.'

Christendom was fortunate in Heraclius. Instead of contemplating either despair or surrender, he called upon the Church to summon all Christians to his aid, and by means of the gold and silver plate presented to him as a war loan by the bishops and clergy, and in command of a large army of volunteers, he beat back the Persians from the very gates of his capital. Not content with a policy of defence, he next invaded Asia, and at the battle of Nineveh utterly destroyed the hosts of Chosroes. The fallen King, deposed by his subjects, was forced to take refuge in the mountains, and later was thrown into a dungeon where he died of cold and starvation.

Had the reign of Heraclius ended at this date, it would be remembered as a glorious era in the history of Constantinople; but unfortunately for his fame another foe was to make more lasting inroads on his Empire, already weakened by the Persian occupation.

When the Emperor (610–41), like Chosroes, received Mahomet's letter, he is said to have read it with polite interest. It seemed to him that this fanatic Arab, who hated the Jews as much as the Christians did, might turn his successful sword not only against them but against the Persians. In this surmise Heraclius was right, for under Abu Bakr, now Caliph, or 'successor', of Mahomet, since the Prophet had left no son, the Moslems invaded Persia.

Unfortunately for Heraclius, they were equally bent on an aggressive campaign against the Christian Empire. 'There is but one God, Allah!' With this test, by which they could distinguish friend from foe, the Arab hosts burst through the gate of Syria, and at Yermuk encountered the imperial army sent by Heraclius to oppose them. The Greeks fought so stubbornly that at first it seemed that their disciplined valour must win. 'Is not Paradise before you? . . . Are not Hell and Satan behind?' cried the Arab leader to his fanatical hordes,

and in response to his words they rallied, broke the opposing lines by the sudden ferocity of their charge, and finally drove the imperial troops in headlong flight.

After the battle of Yermuk Syria fell and Palestine was invaded. In 637 Jerusalem became a Moslem town, with a mosque standing where once had been the famous temple of Solomon. Mahomet had declared Jerusalem a sanctuary only second in glory to Mecca; and his followers with a toleration strange in that age left under Christian guardianship the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre and other sacred sites.

After Syria, Palestine; after Palestine, Egypt and the north African coast-line. The dying Heraclius heard nothing but the bitter news of disaster, and after his death the quarrels of his descendants increased the feebleness of Christian resistance, A spirit of unity might have carried the Moslem banners to the limits of the Eastern Empire, but in 656 the Caliph Othman was murdered, and the civil war that ensued enabled the Christian Emperor, Constans II, to negotiate peace. He had lost Tripoli. Syria, Egypt, and the greater part of Armenia to his foes, who had also succeeded in establishing a naval base in the Mediterranean that threatened the islands of Greece herself. In the north his borders were overrun by Bulgar and Slav tribes, while in Italy the Lombards maintained a perpetual struggle against his viceroy, the Exarch of Ravenna.

Constans himself spent six years in Italy, the greater part in campaigns against the Lombards. He even visited Rome, but earned hatred there as elsewhere by his ruthless pillage of the West for the benefit of the East. Thus the Pantheon was stripped of its golden tiles to enrich Constantinople, and the churches of South Italy robbed of their plate to pay for his wars. At last a conspiracy was formed against him, and while enjoying the baths at Syracuse one of his servants struck him on the head with a marble soap-box and fractured his skull. Constans had been a brave and resolute Emperor of considerable military ability. His son, Constantine 'Pogonatus', or 'the bearded', inherited his gifts and drove back the Mahometans from Constantinople with so great a loss of men and prestige that the

Caliph promised to pay a large sum of money as tribute every year in return for peace.

Constantine 'Pogonatus' died when a comparatively young man and was succeeded by his son, Justinian II, a lad of seventeen, arrogant, cruel, and restless. Without any reason save ambition he picked a quarrel with the Moslem Caliph, marched a large army across his Eastern border, and, when he met with defeat, proceeded in his rage to execute his generals and soldiers, declaring that they had failed him. At home, in Constantinople, his ministers tortured the inhabitants in order to exact money for his treasury and filled the imperial dungeons with senators and men of rank suspected of disloyalty.

Such a state of affairs could not last; and the Emperor, who treated his friends as badly as his foes, was captured by one of his own generals, and, after having his nose cruelly slit, was exiled to the Crimea. Mutilation was supposed to be a final bar to the right of wearing the imperial crown; but Justinian II was the type of man to be ignored only when dead. After some years of brooding over his wrongs he fled from the Crimea and took refuge with the King of the Bulgars.

On his sea-journey a terrific storm arose that threatened to overwhelm both him and his crew. 'My Lord,' exclaimed one of his attendants, 'I pray you make a vow to God that if He spare you, you also will spare your enemies.' 'May God sink this vessel here and now,' retorted his master, 'if I spare a single one of them that falls into my hands,' and the words were an ill omen for his reign, that began once more in 705 when, with the aid of Bulgar troops and of treachery within the capital, Justinian II established himself once more in Constantinople.

During six years the Empire suffered his tyranny anew; and those who had previously helped to dethrone him were hunted down, tortured, and put to death. Like Nero of old he burned alive his political enemies, or he would order the nobles of his court who had offended him to be sewn up in sacks and thrown into the sea. At last another rebellion brought a final end to his reign, and that of the house of Heraclius, for both he and his

young son were murdered, and the Eastern Empire given up to anarchy.

The man who did most to save Constantinople from the next Mahometan invasion was one of the military governors of the Empire called Leo the Isaurian. Conscious of his own ability he took advantage of his first successes to seize the imperial crown; and then, having heard that the Mahometan fleet was moored off the shores of Asia Minor, he secretly sent a squadron of his own vessels that set the enemy's ships on fire. In the panic that ensued more than half the Arabian ships were sunk. About the same time a Mahometan land force was also defeated by the King of the Bulgars, who had allied himself with the Emperor on account of their mutual dread of an Eastern invasion. The result of these combined Christian victories was that the Caliph Moslemah, whose main forces were encamped beneath the walls of Constantinople, grew alarmed lest he should be cut off from support and provisions. He therefore raised the siege, embarked his army in what remained of his fleet, and retreated to his own kingdom, leaving the Christian capital free from acute danger from the East for another three hundred years.

Elsewhere the Mahometans pursued their triumphant progress with little check. After the fall of Carthage in 697 North Africa lay almost undefended before them; and the half-savage tribes such as the Berbers, who lived on the borders of the desert, welcomed the new faith with its mission of conversion by the sword and prospects of plunder.

It was the Berbers who at the invitation, according to tradition, of a treacherous Spanish Governor, Count Julian, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and descended on the plains of Andalusia.

Spain, when the power of the Roman Empire snapped, had been invaded first by Vandals and then by Visigoths. The Vandals, as we have seen,[1] passed on to Africa, while the Visigoths, like the Lombards in Italy, became converted to Christianity, and, falling under the influence of the civilization and luxury they saw around them, gradually adapted their government, laws, and way of life to the system and ideals of

[1] See p. 43.

those whom they had conquered. Thus their famous *Lex Visigothorum*, or 'Law of the Visigoths', was in reality the Roman code remodelled to suit the German settlers.

In this new land the descendants of the once warlike Teutons acquired an indifference to the arts of war, and when their King Rodrigo had been killed at the disastrous battle of Guadelete and his army overthrown, they made little further resistance to the Saracen hordes except in the far northern mountains of the Asturias. From France we have seen[1] the Mahometans were beaten back by Charles Martel, and here, established in Spain and on the borders of the Eastern Empire, we must leave their fortunes for the time. If Mahomet's life is short and can be quickly told the story of how his followers attempted to establish their rule over Christendom is nothing else than the history of the foreign policy of Europe during mediaeval times.

[1] See p. 62.

VIII

CHARLEMAGNE

JUST before his death Pepin the Short had divided his lands between his two sons, Charles, who was about twenty-six, and Carloman, a youth some years younger. As they had no affection for each other, this division did not work well. Carloman gave little promise of statesmanlike qualities: he was peevish and jealous, and easily persuaded by the nobles who surrounded him that his elder brother was a rival who intended to rob him of his possessions, it might be of his life. There seems to have been no ground for this suspicion; but nevertheless he spent his days in trying to hinder whatever schemes Charles proposed; and when he died, three years later, there was a general breath of relief.

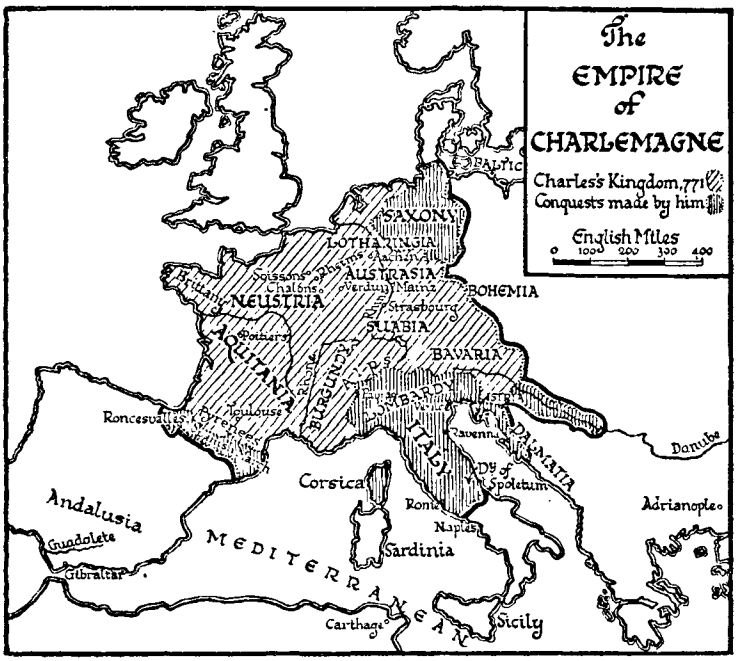
Enumerating the blessings that Heaven had bestowed on Charlemagne, a monk, writing to the King about this time, completed his list with the candid statement: 'the fifth and not least that God has removed your brother from this earthly kingdom'.

Charlemagne was exactly the kind of person to seize the fancy of the early Middle Ages. Tall and well built, with an eagle nose and eyes that flashed like a lion when he was angry so that none dared to meet their gaze, he excelled all his court in strength, energy, and skill. He could straighten out with his fingers four horseshoes locked together, lift a warrior fully equipped for battle to the level of his shoulder, and fell a horse and its rider with a single blow.

It was his delight to keep up old national customs and to wear the Frankish dress with its linen tunic, cross-gartered leggings, and long mantle reaching to the feet. 'What is the use of these rags?' he once inquired contemptuously of his courtiers, point-

ing to their short cloaks—'Will they cover me in bed, or shield me from the wind and rain when I ride abroad?'

This criticism was characteristic of the King. Intent on a multitude of schemes for the extension or improvement of his lands, and so eager to realize them that he would start on fresh ones when still heavily encumbered with the old, he was yet,



for all his enthusiasm, no vague dreamer but a level-headed man looking questions in the face and demanding a practical answer.

By the irony of fate it is the least practical and important task he undertook that has made his name world-famous; for the story of Charlemagne and his Paladins, told in that greatest of mediaeval epics, the *Chanson de Roland*, exceeds to-day in popularity even the exploits of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

This much is history—that Charlemagne, invited secretly by some discontented Emirs to invade Spain and attack the Caliph of Cordova, crossed the Pyrenees, and, after reducing several towns successfully, was forced to retreat. On his way back across the mountains his rearguard was cut off by Gascon mountaineers, and slaughtered almost to a man; while he and the rest of his army escaped with difficulty.

On this meagre and rather inglorious foundation poets of the eleventh century based a cycle of romance. Charlemagne is the central figure, but round him are grouped numerous 'Paladins', or famous knights, including the inseparable friends Oliver and Roland, Warden of the Breton Marches. After numerous deeds of glory in the land of Spain, the King, it was said, was forced by treachery to turn back towards the French mountains, and had already passed the summits, when Roland, in charge of the rearguard, found himself entrapped in the Pass of Roncesvalles by a large force of Gascons. His horn was slung at his side but he disdained to summon help from those in the van, and drawing his good sword 'Durenda' laid about him valiantly.

The Gascons fell back, dismayed by the vigorous resistance of the French; but thirty thousand Saracens came to their aid, and the odds were now overwhelming. Oliver lay dead, and, covered with wounds, Roland fell to the ground also, but first of all he broke 'Durenda' in half that none save he might use this peerless blade. Putting his horn to his lips, with his dying breath he sounded a blast that was heard by Charlemagne in his camp more than eight miles away. 'Surely that is the horn of Roland?' cried the King uneasily, but treacherous courtiers explained away the sound; and it was not till a breathless messenger came with the news of the reverse that he hastened towards the scene of battle. There in the pass, stretched on the ground amid the heaped-up bodies of their enemies, he found his Paladins—Roland with his arms spread in the form of a cross, his broken sword beside him: and seeing him the King fell on his knees weeping. 'Oh, right arm of thy Sovereign's body, Honour of the Franks, Sword of Justice .... Why did

I leave thee here to perish? How can I behold thee dead and not die with thee?' At last, restraining his grief, Charlemagne gathered his forces together; and the very sun, we are told, stood still to watch his terrible vengeance on Gascons and Saracens for the slaughter of Christians at Roncesvalles.

The *Chanson de Roland* is one of the masterpieces of French literature. It is not history, but in its fiction lies a substantial germ of truth. Charlemagne in the early ninth century was what poets described him more than two hundred years later—the central figure in Christendom, the recognized champion of the Cross whether against Mahometans or pagans. 'Through your prosperity', wrote Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon monk and scholar who lived at his court, 'Christendom is preserved, the Catholic Faith defended, the law of justice made known to all men.'

When the Popes sought help against the Lombards, it was to Charlemagne as to his father Pepin that they naturally turned. Charlemagne had hoped at the beginning of his reign to maintain a friendship with King Didier of Lombardy and had even married his daughter, an alliance that roused the Pope of that date to demand in somewhat violent language: 'Do you not know that all the children of the Lombards are lepers, that the race is outcast from the family of nations? For these there is neither part nor lot in the Heavenly Kingdom. May they broil with the devil and his angels in everlasting fire!'

Charlemagne went his own way, in spite of papal denunciations; but he soon tired of his bride, who was plain and feeble in health, and divorced her that he might marry a beautiful German princess. This was, of course, a direct insult to King Didier, who henceforth regarded the Frankish king as his enemy; and Rome took care that the gulf once made between the sovereigns should not be bridged.

In papal eyes the Lombards had really become accursed. It is true that they had been since the days of Gregory the Great orthodox Catholics, that their churches were some of the most beautiful in Italy, their monasteries the most famous for learning, and Pavia, their capital, a centre for students and men of letters.

Their sin did not lie in heretical views, but in the position of their kingdom that now included not only modern Lombardy in the north, but also the Duchy of Spoletum in South Italy. Between stretched the papal dominions like a broad wall from Ravenna to the Western Mediterranean; and on either side the Lombards chafed, trying to annex a piece of land here or a city there, while the Popes watched them, lynx-eyed, eager on their part to dispossess such dangerous neighbours, but unable to do so without assistance from beyond the Alps.

Soon after the death of his younger brother Charlemagne was persuaded to take up the papal cause and invade Italy. At Geneva, where he held the 'Mayfield' or annual military review of his troops, he laid the object of his campaign before them, and was answered by their shouts of approval.

It was a formidable host, for the Franks expected every man who owned land in their dominions to appear at these gatherings prepared for war. The rich would be mounted, protected by mail shirts and iron headpieces, and armed with sword and dagger; the poor would come on foot, some with bows and arrows, others with lance and shield, and the humblest of all with merely scythes or wooden clubs. Tenants on the royal demesnes must bring with them all the free men on their estates; and while it was possible to obtain exemption the fine demanded was so heavy that few could pay it.

When the army set out in battle array, it was accompanied by numerous baggage-carts, lumbering wagons covered with leather awnings, that contained enough food for three months as well as extra clothes and weapons. It was the general hope that on the return journey the wagons would be filled to overflowing with the spoils of the conquered enemy.

The Lombards had ceased, with the growth of luxury and comfortable town life, to be warriors like the Franks; and Charlemagne met with almost as little resistance as Pepin in past campaigns. After a vain attempt to hold the Western passes of the Alps, Didier and his army fled to Pavia, where they fortified themselves, leaving the rest of the country at the mercy of the invaders.

Frankish chroniclers in later years drew a realistic picture of Didier, crouched in one of the high towers of the city, awaiting in trembling suspense the coming of the 'terrible Charles'. Beside him stood Otger, a Frankish duke, who had been a follower of the dead Carloman and was therefore hostile to his elder brother. 'Is Charles in that great host?' demanded the King continually, as first the long line of baggage-wagons came winding across the plain, and then an army of the 'common-folk', and after them the bishops with their train of abbots and clerks. Every time his companion answered him, 'No! not yet!'

'Then Didier hated the light of day. He stammered and sobbed and said, "Let us go down and hide in the earth from so terrible a foe." And Otger too was afraid; well he knew the might and the wrath of the peerless Charles; in his better days he had often been at court. And he said, "When you see the plain bristle with a harvest of spears, and rivers of black steel come pouring in upon your city walls, then you may look for the coming of Charles." While he yet spoke a black cloud arose in the West and the glorious daylight was turned to darkness. The Emperor came on; a dawn of spears darker than night rose on the beleaguered city. King Charles, that man of iron, appeared; iron his helmet, iron his armguards, iron the corselet on his breast and shoulders. His left hand grasped an iron lance . . . iron the spirit, iron the hue of his war steed. Before, behind, and at his side rode men arrayed in the same guise. Iron filled the plain and open spaces, iron points flashed back the sunlight. "There is the man whom you would see," said Otger to the king; and so saying he swooned away, like one dead.'

In spite of this picture of Carolingian might, it took the Franks six months to reduce Pavia; and then Didier, at last surrendering, was sent to a monastery, while Charlemagne proclaimed himself king of the newly acquired territories. During the siege, leaving capable generals to conduct it, he himself had gone to Rome, where he was received with feasting and joy. Crowds of citizens came out to the gates to welcome him, carrying palms and olive-branches, and hailed him as 'Patrician' and 'Defender of the Church'. Dismounting from his horse he passed on foot through the streets of Rome to the cathedral;

and there, in the manner of the ordinary pilgrim, climbed the steps on his knees, until the Pope awaiting him at the top, raised and embraced him. From the choir arose the exultant shout, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

A few days later, once more standing in St. Peter's, Charlemagne affixed his seal to the donation Pepin had given to the Church. The document was entered amongst the papal archives; but it has long since disappeared, and with it exact information as to the territories concerned.

About this time the papal court produced another document, the so-called 'Donation of Constantine', in which the first of the Christian emperors apparently granted to the Popes the western half of the Roman Empire. Centuries later this was proved to be a forgery, but for a long while people accepted it as genuine, and the power of the Popes was greatly increased. We do not know how much Charles believed in papal supremacy in temporal matters; but throughout his reign his attitude to the Pope over Italian affairs was rather that of master to servant than the reverse. It was only when spiritual questions were under discussion that he was prepared to yield as if to a higher authority.

When he had reduced Pavia Charlemagne left Lombardy to be ruled by one of his sons and returned to France; but it was not very long before he was called back to Italy, as fresh trouble had arisen there. The cause was the unpopularity of Pope Leo III in Rome and the surrounding country, where turbulent nobles rebelled as often as they could against the papal government. One day, as Leo was riding through the city at the head of a religious procession, a band of armed men rushed out from a side street, separated him from his attendants, dragged him from his horse, and beat him mercilessly, leaving him half dead. It was even said that they put out his eyes and cut off his tongue, but that these were later restored by a miracle.

Leo, at any rate, whole though shaken, succeeded in reaching Charlemagne's presence, and the King was faced by the problem of going to Rome to restore order. Had it been merely a matter of exacting vengeance, he would have found little difficulty with

his army of stalwart Franks behind him; but Leo's enemies were not slow in bringing forward accusations against their victim that they claimed justified their assault. Charlemagne was thus in an awkward position, for he was too honest a ruler to refuse to hear both sides, and his respect for the papal office could not blind him to the possibility of evil in the acts of the person who held it, especially in the case of an ambitious statesman like Leo III.

He felt that it was his duty to sift the matter to the bottom; and yet by what law could the King of France or even of Italy put Christ's vice-regent upon his trial and cross-examine him?

One way of dealing with this problem would have been to seek judgement at Constantinople as the seat of Empire, a final 'appeal unto Caesar' such as St. Paul had made in classical times: but, ever since Pepin the Short had given the Exarchate of Ravenna to the Pope instead of restoring it to Byzantine Emperors, relations with the East, never cordial, had grown more strained. Now they were at breaking point. The late Emperor, a mere boy, had been thrown into a dungeon and blinded by his mother, the Empress Irene, in order that she might usurp his throne; and the Western Empire recoiled from the idea of accepting such a woman as arbiter of their destinies.

Thus Charlemagne, forced to act on his own responsibility, examined the evidence laid before him and declared Leo innocent of the crimes of which he had been accused. In one sense it was a complete triumph for the Pope; but Leo was a clear-sighted statesman and knew that the power to which he had been restored rested on a weak foundation. The very fact that he had been compelled to appeal for justice to a temporal sovereign lowered the office that he held in the eyes of the world; and he possessed no guarantee that, once the Franks had left Rome, his enemies would not again attack him. Without a recognized champion, always ready to enforce her will, the Papacy remained at the mercy of those who chose to oppose or hinder her.

In the dramatic scene that took place in St. Peter's Cathedral on Christmas Day, A. D. 800, Leo found a way out of his difficulties. Arrayed in gorgeous vestments, he said Mass before the High

Altar, lit by a thousand candles hanging at the arched entrance to the chancel. In the half-gloom beyond knelt Charlemagne and his sons; and at the end of the service Leo, approaching them with a golden crown in his hands, placed it upon the King's head. Instantly the congregation burst into the cry with which Roman emperors of old had been acclaimed at their accession. 'To Charles Augustus, crowned of God, the great and pacific Emperor, long life and victory!' 'From that time', says a Frankish chronicle, commenting on this scene, 'there was no more a Roman Empire at Constantinople.'

Leo had found his champion, and in anointing and crowning him had emphasized the dignity of his own office. He had also pleased the citizens of Rome, who rejoiced to have an Emperor again after the lapse of more than three centuries. Charlemagne alone was doubtful of the greatness that had been thrust upon him and accepted it with reluctance. He had troubles enough near home without embroiling himself with Constantinople; but as it turned out the Eastern Empire was too busy deposing the Empress Irene to object actively to its rejection in the West; and Irene's successors agreed to acknowledge the imperial rank of their rival in return for the cession of certain coveted lands on the Eastern Adriatic.

Other sovereigns hastened to pay their respects to the new Emperor, and Charlemagne received several embassies in search of alliance from Haroun al-Raschid, the Caliph of Bagdad. Haroun al-Raschid ruled over a mighty empire stretching from Persia to Egypt, and thence along the North African coast to the Strait of Gibraltar. On one occasion he sent Charlemagne a present of a wonderful water-clock that, as it struck the hour of twelve, opened as many windows, through which armed horsemen rode forth and back again. Far more exciting in Western eyes was the unhappy elephant that for nine years remained the glory of the imperial court at Aachen. Its death, when they were about to lead it forth on an expedition against the northern tribes of Germany, is noted sadly in the national annals.

Rulers less fortunate than Haroun al-Raschid sought not so much the friendship of the Western Emperor as his

protection, and through his influence exiled kings of Wessex and Northumberland were able to recover their thrones. Most significant tribute of all to the honour in which Charlemagne's name was held was the petition of the Patriarch of Jerusalem that he would come and rescue Christ's city from the infidel. The message was accompanied by a banner and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre; but Charlemagne, though deeply moved by such a call to the defence of Christendom, knew that the campaign was beyond his power and put it from him. Were there not infidels to be subdued within the boundaries of his own Empire, fierce Saxon tribes that year after year made mock both of the sovereignty of the Franks and their religion?

The Saxons lived amongst the ranges of low hills between the Rhine and the Elbe. By the end of the eighth century, when other Teutonic races such as the Franks and the Bavarians had yielded to the civilizing influence of Christianity, they still cherished their old beliefs in the gods of nature and offered sacrifices to spirits dwelling in groves and fountains. The chief object of their worship was a huge tree trunk that they kept hidden in the heart of a forest, their priests declaring that the whole Heavens rested upon it. This *Irminsul*, or 'All-supporting pillar', was the bond between one group of Saxons and another that led them to rally round their chiefs when any foreign army appeared on their soil; though, if at peace with the rest of the world, they would fight amongst themselves for sheer love of battle.

A part of the Saxon race had settled in the island of Britain, when the Roman authority weakened at the break-up of the Empire; and amongst the descendants of these settlers were some Christian priests who determined to carry the Gospel to the heathen tribes of Germany, men and women of their own race but still living in spiritual darkness. The most famous of these missionaries was St. Winifrith, or St. Boniface according to the Latin version of his name that means, 'He who brings peace.'

About the time that Charles Martel was Duke of the Franks Boniface arrived in Germany and began to travel from one part

of the country to another, explaining the Gospel of Christ, and persuading those whom he converted to build churches and monasteries. When he went to Rome to give an account of his work the Pope made him a bishop and sent him to preach in the Duchy of Bavaria. Later, as his influence increased and he gathered disciples round him, he was able to found not only parish churches but bishoprics with a central archbishopric at Mainz; thus, long before Germany became a nation she possessed a Church with an organized government that belonged not to one but to all her provinces.

Only in the north and far east of Germany heathenism still held sway; and St. Boniface, after he had gone at the Pope's wish to help the Franks reform their Church, determined to make one last effort to complete his missionary work in the land he had chosen as his own. He was now sixty-five, but nothing daunted by the hardships and dangers of the task before him he set off with a few disciples to Friesland and began to preach to the wild pagan tribes who lived there. Before he could gain a hearing, however, he was attacked, and, refusing to defend himself, was put to death.

Thus passed away 'the Apostle of Germany' and with him much of the kindliness of his message. Christianity was to come indeed to these northern tribes, but through violence and the sword rather than by the influence of a gentle life. Charlemagne had a sincere love of the Catholic Faith, whose champion he believed himself; but he considered that only folly and obstinacy could blind men's eyes to the truth of Christianity, and he was determined to enforce its doctrines by the sword if necessary.

The Saxons, on the other hand, though if they were beaten in battle they might yield for a time and might promise to pay tribute to the Franks and build churches, remained heathens at heart. When an opportunity occurred, and they learned that the greater part of the Frankish army was in Italy or on the Spanish border, they would sally forth across their boundaries and drive out or kill the missionaries. Charlemagne knew that he could have no peace within his Empire until he had subdued the Saxons; but the task he had set himself was harder than he had

imagined, and it was thirty-eight years before he could claim that he had succeeded.

'The final conquest of the Saxons', says Eginhard, a scholar who lived at Charlemagne's court and wrote his life, 'would have been accomplished sooner but for their treachery. It is hard to tell how often they broke faith, surrendering to the King and accepting his terms, and then breaking out into wild rebellion once more.' Eginhard continues that Charlemagne's method was never to allow a revolt to remain unpunished but to set out at once with an army and exact vengeance. On one of these campaigns he succeeded in reaching the forest where the sacred trunk *Irminsul* was kept and set fire to it and destroyed it; but the Saxons, though disheartened for the moment, soon rallied under the banner of a famous chief called Witikind. We know little of the latter except his undaunted courage that made him refuse for many years to submit to a foe so much stronger that he must obviously gain the final victory.

Charlemagne, exasperated by repeated opposition, used every means to forward his aim. Sometimes he would bribe separate chieftains to betray their side; but often he would employ methods of deliberate cruelty in order to strike terror into his foes. Four thousand five hundred Saxons who had started a rebellion were once cut off and captured by the Franks. They pleaded that Witikind, who had escaped into Denmark, had prompted them to act against their better judgement. 'If Witikind is not here you must pay the penalty in his stead,' returned the King relentlessly, and the whole number were put to the sword.

At different times he transplanted hundreds of Saxon households into the heart of France, and in the place of 'this great multitude', as the chronicle describes them, he established Frankish garrisons. He also sent missionaries to build churches in the conquered territories and compelled the inhabitants to become Christians.

Often the bishops and priests thus sent would have to fly before a sudden raid of heathen Saxons hiding in the neighbouring forests and marshes; and, lacking the courage of St. Boniface, a few would hesitate to return when the danger was

suppressed. 'What ought I to do?' cried one of the most timid, appealing to Charlemagne. 'In Christ's name go back to thy diocese,' was the stern answer.

While the King expected the same obedience and devotion from church officials as from the captains in his army, he took care that they should not lack his support in the work he had set them to do.

'If any man among the Saxons, being not yet baptized, shall hide himself and refuse to come to baptism, let him die the death.'

'If any man despise the Lenten fast for contempt of Christianity, let him die the death.'

'Let all men, whether nobles, free, or serfs, give to the Churches and the priests the tenth part of their substance and labour.'

These 'capitularies', or laws, show that Charlemagne was still half a barbarian at heart and matched pagan savagery with a severity more ruthless because it was more calculating. In the end Witikind himself, in spite of his courage, was forced to surrender and accept baptism, and gradually the whole of Saxony fell under the Frankish yoke.

The Duchy of Bavaria, that had been Christian for many years, did not offer nearly so stubborn a resistance; and after he had reduced both it and Saxony to submission, Charlemagne was ruler not merely in name but in reality of an Empire that included France, the modern Holland and Belgium, Germany, and the greater part of Italy. Some of the conquests he had made were to fall away, but Germany that had suffered most at his hands emerged in the end the greatest achievement of his foreign wars.

He swept away the black deceitful night
And taught our race to know the only light,

wrote a Saxon monk of the ninth century, showing that already some of the bitterness had vanished. 'In a few generations', says a modern writer, 'the Saxons were conspicuous for their loyalty to the Faith.'

No story of Charlemagne would be true to life that omitted his harsh dealings with his Saxon foe; and yet it would be equally unfair to paint him only as a warrior, mercilessly exterminating

all who opposed him in barbaric fashion. Far more than a conqueror he was an empire-builder to whom war was not an end in itself, as to his Frankish forefathers, but a means towards the safeguarding of his realm.

The forts and outworks that he planted along his boundaries, the churches that he built in the midst of hostile territory, belonged indeed to his policy of inspiring terror and awe: but Charlemagne had also other designs only in part of a military nature. Roads and bridges that should make a network of communication across the Empire, acting like channels of civilization in assisting transport and encouraging trade and intercourse: royal palaces that should become centres of justice for the surrounding country: monasteries that should shed the light of knowledge and of faith: all these formed part of his dream of a Roman Empire brought back to her old stately life and power.

A canal joining the Rhine and Danube and thus making a continuous waterway between East and West was planned and even begun, but had to wait till modern times for its completion. Charlemagne possessed the vision and enterprise that did not quail before big undertakings, but he lacked the money and labour necessary for carrying them out. Unlike the Roman Emperors of classic times he had no treasury on whose taxes he could draw; but depended, save for certain rents, on the revenues of his private estates that were usually paid 'in kind', that is to say, not in coin but at the rate of so many head of cattle, or of so much milk, corn, or barley, according to the means of the tenant. Of these supplies he kept a careful account even to the number of hens on the royal farms and the quantity of eggs that they laid. Yet at their greatest extent revenues 'in kind' could do little more than satisfy the daily needs of the palace.

The chief debt that the Frankish nation owed to the state was not financial but military, the obligation of service in the field laid on every freeman. As the Empire increased in size this became so irksome that the system was somewhat modified. In future men who possessed less than a certain quantity of land might join together and pay one or two of their number, according to the

size of their joint properties, to represent them in the army abroad, while the rest remained at home to see to the cultivation of the crops.

Charlemagne was very anxious to raise a body of labourers from each district to assist in his building schemes, but this suggestion awoke a storm of indignation. Landowners maintained that they were only required by law to repair the roads and bridges in their own neighbourhood, not to put their tenants at the disposal of the Emperor that he might send them at his whim from Aquitaine to Bavaria, or from Austria to Lombardy; and in face of this opposition many of his designs ceased abruptly from lack of labour. A royal palace and cathedral, adorned with columns and mosaics from Ravenna, were, however, completed at Aachen; and here Charlemagne established his principal residence and gathered his court round him.

The life of this 'new Rome', as he loved to call it, was simple in the extreme; for the Emperor, like a true Frank, hated unnecessary ostentation and ceremony. When the chief nobles and officials assembled twice a year in the spring and autumn to debate on public matters, he would receive them in person, thanking them for the gifts they had brought him, and walking up and down amongst them to jest with one and ask questions of another with an informality that would have scandalized the court at Constantinople.

In this easy intercourse between sovereign and subject lay the secret of Charlemagne's personal magnetism. To warriors and churchmen as to officials and the ordinary freemen of his demesnes he was not some far-removed authority, who could be approached only through a maze of court intrigue, but a man like themselves with virtues and failings they could understand.

If his temper was hasty and terrible when roused, it would soon melt away into a genial humour that appreciated to the full the rough practical jokes in which the age delighted. The chronicles tell us with much satisfaction how Charlemagne once persuaded a Jew to offer a 'vainglorious bishop ever fond of vanities' a painted mouse that he pretended he had brought back straight from Judea. The bishop at first declined to give

more than £3 for such a treasure; but, deceived by the Jew's prompt refusal to part with it for so paltry a sum, consented at length to hand over a bushel of silver in exchange. The Emperor, hearing this, gathered the rest of the bishops at his court together—'See what one of you has paid for a mouse!' he exclaimed gleefully; and we may be sure that the story did not stop at the royal presence but spread throughout the country, where haughty ecclesiastics were looked on with little favour.

We are told also that Charlemagne loved to bombard the people he met, from the Pope downwards, with difficult questions; but it was not merely a malicious desire to bring them to confusion that prompted his inquiries. Alert himself, and keenly interested in whatever business he had in hand, he despised slipshod or inefficient knowledge. He expected a bishop to be an authority on theology, an official to be an expert on methods of government, a scholar to be well grounded in the ordinary sciences of his day.

Hard work was the surest road to his favour, and he spared neither himself nor those who entered his service. Even at night he would place writing materials beneath his pillow that if he woke or thought of anything it might be noted down. On one occasion he visited the palace school that he had founded, and discovered that while the boys of humble birth were making the most of their opportunities, the sons of the nobles, despising book-learning, had frittered away their time. Commending those who had done well, the Emperor turned to the others with an angry frown. 'Relying on your birth and wealth,' he exclaimed, 'and caring nothing for our commands and your own improvement, you have neglected the study of letters and have indulged yourselves in pleasures and idleness. . . . By the King of Heaven I care little for your noble birth. . . . Know this, unless straightway you make up for your former negligence by earnest study, you need never expect any favour from the hand of Charles.'

It was with the wealthy nobles and landowners that Charlemagne fought some of his hardest battles, though no sword was drawn or open war declared. Not only were most of the

high offices at court in their hands, but it was from their ranks that the counts, and later the viscounts, were chosen who ruled over the districts into which the Empire was divided and subdivided.

The count received a third of the gifts and rents from his province that would have otherwise been paid to the King; and these, if he were unscrupulous, he could increase at the expense of those he governed. He presided in the local law-courts and was responsible for the administration of justice, the exaction of fines, and for the building of roads and bridges. He was in fact a petty king, and would often tyrannize over the people and neglect the royal interests to forward his selfish ambitions.

The Merovingians had tried to limit the authority of the counts and other provincial officials by occasionally sending private agents of their own to inquire into the state of the provinces and to reform the abuses that they found. Charlemagne adopted this practice as a regular system; and at the annual assemblies he appointed *Missi*, or 'messengers', who should make a tour of inspection in the district to which they had been sent at least four times in the year and afterwards report on their progress to the Emperor. Wherever they went the count or viscount must yield up his authority to them for the time being, allowing them to sit in his court and hear all the grievances and complaints that the men and women of the district cared to bring forward. If the *Missi* insisted on certain reforms the count must carry them out and also make atonement for any charges proved against him.

Here are some of the evils that the men of Istria, a province on the Eastern Adriatic, suffered at the hands of their lord, 'Johannes', and that the inquiries of the royal *Missi* at length brought to light. Johannes had sold the people on his estates as serfs to his sons and daughters: he had forced them to build houses for his family and to go voyages on his business across the sea to Venice and Ravenna: he had seized the common land and used it as his own, bringing in Slavs from across the border to till it for his private use: he had robbed his tenants of their horses and their money on the plea of the Emperor's service

and had given them nothing in exchange. 'If the Emperor will help us,' they cried, 'we may be saved, but if not we had better die than live.'

From this account we can see that Charlemagne appeared to the mass of his subjects as their champion against the tyranny of the nobles, and in this sense his government may be called popular; but the old 'popular' assemblies of the Franks at which the laws were made had ceased by this reign to be anything but aristocratic gatherings summoned to approve of the measures laid before them.

The Emperor's 'capitularies' would be based on the advice he had received from his most trusted *Missi*; and when they had been discussed by the principal nobles, they would be read to the general assembly and ratified by a formal acceptance that meant nothing, because it rarely or never was changed into a refusal.

Besides introducing new legislation in the form of royal edicts or capitularies, Charlemagne commanded that a collection should be made of all the old tribal laws, such as the Salic Law of the Franks, and of the chief codes that had been handed down by tradition, or word of mouth, for generations; and this compilation was revised and brought up to date. It was a very useful and necessary piece of work, yet Charlemagne for all his industry does not deserve to be ranked as a great lawgiver like Justinian. The very earnestness of his desire to secure immediate justice made his capitularies hasty and inadequate. He would not wait to trace some evil to its root and then try to eradicate it, but would pass a number of laws on the matter, only touching the surface of what was wrong and creating confusion by the multiplicity of instructions and the contradictions they contained.

Sometimes the *Missi* themselves were not a success, but would take bribes from the rich landowners on their tour of inspection, and this would mean more government machinery and fresh laws to bring them under the royal control in their turn. If it was difficult to make wise laws, it was even harder in that rough age to carry them out; for the nobles found it to their interest to defy or at least hinder an authority that struck at their power;

while the mass of the people were too ignorant to bear responsibility, and few save those educated in the palace schools could become trustworthy 'counts' or royal agents.

Dimly, however, the nation understood that the Emperor held some high ideal of government planned for their prosperity. 'No one cried out to him', says the chronicle, 'but straightway he should have good justice': and in every church throughout France those who had not been called to follow him to battle prayed for his safety and that God would subdue the barbarians before his triumphant arms.

To Charlemagne there was a higher vision than that of mere victory in battle, a vision born of his favourite book, the *Civitas Dei*, wherein St. Augustine had described the perfect Emperor, holding his sceptre as a gift God had given and might take away, and conquering his enemies that he might lead them to a greater knowledge and prosperity.

Charlemagne believed that to him had been entrusted the guardianship of the Catholic Church, not only from the heathen without its pale, but from false doctrine and evil living within. To the Pope, as Christ's vice-regent, he bore himself humbly, as on the day when he had climbed St. Peter's steps on his knees, but to the Pope as a man dealing with other men he spoke as a lord to his vassal, tendering his views and expecting compliance, in return for which he guaranteed the support of his sword.

'May the ruler of the Church be rightly ruled by thee, O King, and may'st thou be ruled by the right hand of the Almighty!' In this prayer Alcuin probably expressed the Emperor's opinion of his own position. Leo III, on the other hand, preferred to talk of his champion as a faithful son of the mother Church of Rome; thereby implying that the Emperor should pay a son's duty of obedience: but he himself was never in a strong enough position to enforce this point of view, and the clash of Empire and Papacy was left for a later age.

Within his own dominions Charlemagne, like the Frankish kings before him, reigned supreme over the Church, appointing whom he would as bishops, and using them often as *Missi* to assist him in his government. Yet the Church remained an

'estate' apart from the rest of the nation, supported by the revenues of the large sees belonging to the different bishoprics and by the *tithe*, or tenth part of a layman's income. When churchmen attended the annual assembly they were allowed to deliberate apart from the nobles and freemen: when a bishop excommunicated some heretic or sinner, the Emperor's court was bound to enforce the sentence. Thus the privileges and rights were many; but Charlemagne determined that the men who enjoyed them must also fulfil the obligations that they carried with them.

In earlier years Charles Martel and St. Boniface had struggled hard to raise the character of the Frankish Church, and Charlemagne continued their task with his usual energy, insisting on frequent inspections of the monasteries and convents and on the maintenance of a stricter rule of life within their walls.

The ordinary parish clergy were also brought under more vigilant supervision. In accordance with the laws of the Roman Church they were not allowed to marry, nor might they take part in any worldly business, enter a tavern, carry arms, or go hunting or hawking. Above all they were encouraged to educate themselves that they might be able to teach their parishioners and set a good example.

'Good works are better than knowledge', wrote Charlemagne to his bishops and abbots in a letter of advice, 'but without knowledge good works are impossible.' In accordance with this view he commanded that a school should be established in every diocese, in order that the boys of the neighbourhood might receive a grounding in the ordinary education of their day. His own court became a centre of learning; for he himself was keenly interested in all branches of knowledge, from a close study of the Scriptures to mathematics or tales of distant lands. Histories he liked to have read out to him at meals. Eginhard, his biographer, tells us that he never learned to write, but that he was proficient in Latin and could understand Greek.

It was his desire to emulate Augustus, the first of the Roman Emperors, and gather round him the most literary men of Europe, and he eagerly welcomed foreign scholars and took

them into his service. Chief amongst these adopted sons of the Empire was Alcuin the Northumbrian, a 'wanderer on the face of the earth' as he called himself, whom Danish invasions had driven from his native land.

Alcuin settled at the Frankish court, organized the 'palace school' of which we have already made mention, and himself wrote the primers from which the boys were taught. His influence soon extended beyond this sphere, and he became the Emperor's chief adviser, inspiring his master with high ideals, while he himself was stirred by the other's vivid personality to share his passion for hard work.

It is this almost volcanic energy that gives the force and charm to Charlemagne's many-sided character. We think of him first, it may be, as the warrior, the hero of romance, or else as a statesman planning his Empire of the West. At another time we see in him the guardian of his people, the king who 'wills that justice should be done', but we recall a story such as that of the painted mouse, and instantly his simple, almost schoolboy, side becomes apparent. The 'Great Charles' was no saint but a Frank of the rough type of soldiers he led to battle, capable of cruelty as of kindness, hot-tempered, a lover of sport, strong perhaps where his ideals were at stake, but weak towards women, and an over-indulgent father, who let the intrigues of his daughters bring scandal on his court. Yet another contrast to this homely figure is the scholar and theologian, the friend of Alcuin, who believed that without knowledge good works were impossible.

Many famous characters in history have equalled or surpassed Charlemagne as general, statesman, or legislator—there have been better scholars and more refined princes—but few or none have followed such divers aims and achieved by the sheer force of their personality such memorable results. Painters and chroniclers love to depict him in old age still majestic; and in truth up till nearly the end of his long reign he kept the fire and vigour of his youth, swimming like a boy in the baths of Aachen, or hunting the wild boar upon the hills, drawing up capitularies, or dictating advice to his bishops, doing, in fact,

whatever came to hand with an intensity that would have exhausted any one less healthy and self-reliant.

Fortunately for Charlemagne he had the sturdy constitution of his race, and when at last he died an old man in 814 people believed that he did not share the common fate of humanity. Nearly two hundred years later, it was said, when the funeral vault was opened, he was found seated in his chair of state, firm of flesh as in life, with his crown on his snowy hair, and his sword clasped in his hand.

'Our Lord gave this boon to Charlemagne that men should speak of him as long as the world endureth.' It is a boast that as centuries pass, sweeping away the memory of lesser heroes, time still justifies.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368-73.

Charlemagne, King of the Franks	768-800
„ Emperor of the West	800-14
Battle of Roncesvalles	778
Invasion of Lombardy	773
Haroun al-Raschid	died 809
St. Boniface	715

IX

THE INVASIONS OF THE NORTHMEN

At the death of Charlemagne the Empire that he had built up stretched from Denmark to the Pyrenees and the Duchy of Spoletum south of Rome, from the Atlantic on the West to the Baltic, Bohemia, and the Dalmatian coast. It had been a brave attempt to realize the old Roman ideal of all civilized Europe gathered under one ruler; but he himself was well aware that the foundations he had laid were weak, his own personality that must vanish the mortar holding them together. Without his genius and the terror of his name his possessions were only too likely to fall away; and therefore, instead of attempting to leave a united Empire, he nominated one son to be emperor in name, but made a rough division of his territory between three. Only the death of two just before his own defeated his aims and united the inheritance under the survivor, Louis.

The new Emperor was like his father in build, but without his wideness of outlook. His natural geniality was sometimes marred by uncontrollable fits of suspicion and cruelty, as in the case of his nephew, Bernard, King of Italy, whom he believed to be secretly conspiring to bring about his overthrow. Louis ordered the young man to appear at his court, and when Bernard hesitated, fearing treachery, his uncle sent him a special promise of safety by the Empress, whom he trusted. Reluctantly Bernard at last obeyed the summons, whereupon he was seized, thrust into a dungeon, and his eyes put out so cruelly that he died. Shortly afterwards the Empress died also, and Louis who had loved her believed that God was punishing him for his broken word. Overcome by remorse he became so devout in his religious observances that his subjects called him 'Louis the Pious'.

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Louis, like his father, was ever ready to listen to the petitions of those who were oppressed and to pass laws for their security. For the first sixteen years of his reign the Carolingian dominions, put to no test, appeared unshaken, and then of a sudden, just as if a cloud were blotting out the sunlight, prosperity and peace were lost in the horrors of civil war.

Louis the Pious had three sons by his first wife, and following Charlemagne's example he named the eldest, Lothar, as his successor in the Empire, while he divided his lands between the other two. It was only when he married again and another son, Charles, was born to him that trouble began. This fourth son was the old Emperor's favourite, and Louis would gladly have left him a large kingdom; but such a gift he could only make now at the expense of the elder brothers, who hated the young boy as an interloper, and were determined that he should receive nothing to which they could lay a claim.

When Charles was six years old Louis insisted that the country now called Switzerland and part of modern Germany (Suabia) should be recognized as his inheritance; and on hearing this all three elder brothers, who had been secretly making disloyal plots, broke into open revolt.

The history of the next ten years is an ignominious chronicle of the Emperor's weakness. Twice were he and his Empress imprisoned and insulted; and on each occasion, when the quarrels of his sons amongst themselves led to his release, he was induced to grant a weak forgiveness that led to further rebellion.

When Louis died in 840, the seeds of dissension were widely scattered; and those of his House who came after him openly showed that they cared for nothing save personal ambition. Lothar, the eldest, was proclaimed Emperor, and obtained as his share of the dominions a large middle kingdom stretching from the mouth of the Rhine to Italy, and including the two capitals of Aachen and Rome. To the East, in what is now Germany, reigned his brother Louis, to the West, in France, Charles 'the Bald', the hated younger brother who had succeeded at the last in obtaining a substantial inheritance.

This division is interesting because it shows two of the nationalities of Europe already emerging from the imperial melting-pot. When the brothers Louis and Charles met at Strasbourg in 842 to confirm an alliance they had formed against Lothar, Charles and his followers took the oath in German, Louis and his nobles in the Romance tongue of which modern French is the descendant. This they did that the armies on both sides might clearly understand how their leaders had bound themselves, and the Oath of Strasbourg remains to-day as evidence of this new growth of nationality that had already acquired distinct national tongues.

The Partition of Verdun, signed shortly afterwards by all three brothers, acknowledged the division of the Empire into three parts, France on the West, Germany in the East, and between them the debatable kingdom of Lotharingia, that, dwindled during the Middle Ages and modern times into the province of Lorraine, has remained always a source of war and trouble.

It would be wearisome to trace in detail the history of the years that followed the Partition of Verdun. One historian has described it as 'a dizzy and unintelligible spectacle of monotonous confusion, a scene of unrestrained treachery, of insatiable and blind rapacity. No son is obedient or loyal to his father, no brother can trust his brother, no uncle spares his nephew.... There were rapid alterations in fortune, rapid changing of sides, there was universal distrust and universal reliance on falsehood or crime.'

In 881 Charles 'the Fat', son of Louis the German, of Strasbourg Oath fame, succeeded, owing to the deaths of his rival cousins and uncles, in uniting for a few years all the dominions of Charlemagne under his sceptre; but, weak and unhealthy, he was not the man to control so great possessions, and very shortly he was deposed and died in prison on an island in Lake Constance. With him faded away the last reflection of the Carolingian glory that had once dazzled the world. In France the descendants of Charles 'the Bald' carried on a precarious existence for several generations, despised and threatened by their own nobles, as the later Merovingians had been, and utterly

unable to defend their land from the hostile invasions of Northmen, that, beginning in the eighth century, seemed likely during the ninth and tenth centuries to paralyse the civilization and trade of Europe as the inroads of Goths, Huns, and Vandals had broken up the Roman Empire.

The long ships of the Northmen had been seen off the French coasts even in the days of Charlemagne, and one of the chroniclers records how the wise king seeing them exclaimed, 'These vessels bear no merchandise but cruel foes,' and then continued, with prophetic grief, 'Know ye why I weep? Truly I fear not that these will injure me; but I am deeply grieved that in my lifetime they should be so near a landing on these shores, and I am overwhelmed with sorrow as I look forward and see what evils they will bring upon my offspring and their people.'

The Northmen, we can guess from their name, came from the wild, often snow-bound, coasts of Scandinavia and Denmark. Few weaklings could survive in such a climate; and the race was tall, well built, and hardy, made up of men and women who despised the fireside and loved to feel the fresh sea-wind beating against their faces. Life to them was a perpetual struggle, but a struggle they had glorified into an ideal, until they had ceased to dread either its discomforts or dangers.

Here is a description of the three classes, thrall, churl, and noble, into which these tribes of Northmen, or 'Vikings', were divided.

'Thrall was swarthy of skin, his hands wrinkled, his knuckles bent, his fingers thick, his face ugly, his back broad, his heels long. He began to put forth his strength binding bast, making loads, and bearing home faggots the weary day long. His children busied themselves with building fences, dunging ploughland, tending swine, herding goats, and digging peat. . . . Carl, or Churl, was red and ruddy, with rolling eyes, and took to breaking oxen, building ploughs, timbering houses, and making carts. Earl, the noble, had yellow hair, his cheeks were rosy, his eyes were keen as a young serpent's. His occupation was shaping the shield, bending the bow, hurling the javelin, shaking the lance, riding horses, throwing dice, fencing and swimming. He began to wake war, to redden the field, and to fell the doomed.'

'To wake war.' This was the object of the Viking's existence. His gods, 'Odin' and 'Thor', were battle heroes who struck one another in the flash of lightning and with the rumble of thunder as they moved their shields. Not for the man who lived long and comfortably and died at last in his bed were either the glory of this world or the joys of the next. The Scandinavian 'Valhalla' was no such 'paradise' as the faithful Moslems conceived, where, in sunlit gardens gay with fruit and flowers, he should rest from his labours, attended by 'houris', or maidens of celestial beauty. The Viking asked for no rest, only for unfailing strength and a foe to kill. In the halls of his paradise reigned perpetual battle all the day long, and, in the evening, feasts where the warrior, miraculously cured of his wounds, could boast of his prowess and rise again on the morrow to fresh deeds of heroic slaughter.

In their dragon-ships, the huge prows fashioned into the heads of fierce animals or monsters, the Viking 'Earls', weary of dicing and throwing the javelin at home, or exiled by their kings for some misdeeds, would sweep in fleets across the North Sea, some to explore Iceland and the far-off shores of Greenland and North America, some to burn the monasteries along the Irish coast, others to raid North Germany, France, or England. At first their only object was plunder, for unlike the Huns they did not despise the luxuries of civilization—only those who allowed its influence to make them 'soft'. At a later date, when they met with little resistance, they began to build homes, and thus the east coast of England became settled with Danish colonies.

'In this year', says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, writing under the date 855, 'the heathen men for the first time remained over winter in Sheppey.'

During the fifty years that followed it seemed as if the invaders might sweep away the Anglo-Saxons as completely as the ancestors of these Anglo-Saxons had exterminated the original British inhabitants and their Roman conquerors. That they failed was largely due to one of the most famous of English kings, Alfred 'the Great', a prince of the royal house of Wessex.

Wessex was a province lying mainly to the south of the River Thames, and at Wantage in Berkshire in the year 849 Alfred was born, cradled in an atmosphere of war and danger. From boyhood he fought by the side of his brothers in a long campaign of which the very victories could not hold at bay the restless Danes. When Alfred succeeded to the throne he secured a temporary peace and began to build a fleet and reform his army; but in a few years his enemies broke across his boundaries once more, and he himself, overwhelmed by their numbers, was forced to take refuge in the marshes of Somerset. Here at Athelney he built a fort and, collecting round him the English warriors of the neighbouring counties, organized so strong a resistance that at last he inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Danish army. King Guthrum, his enemy, sued for peace and at the Treaty of Wedmore consented to become a Christian and to recognize Alfred as King of Wessex, while he himself retained the Danelaw to the north of the Thames.

This was the beginning of a new England, for from this time Alfred and his descendants, having secured the freedom of Wessex, set themselves to win back bit by bit the territory held by the Danes. First of all under Edward 'the Elder', Alfred's son, the middle kingdom of Mercia was won back, and the Danes beyond its border agreed to recognize the King of Wessex as their overlord, while later other Wessex rulers overran Northumbria and the South of Scotland, so that by the middle of the tenth century it could be said that 'England from the Forth to the Channel was under one ruler'.

The winning back of the Danelaw had not been merely a matter of hewing down Northmen, nor did Alfred earn his title of 'the Great' because he could wield a sword bravely and lead other men who could do the same. He was a successful general because in an age of wild fighting he recognized the value of discipline and training. In order to obtain the type of men he required he increased the number of 'Thegns', that is, of nobles whose duty it was to serve the King as horsemen, while he reorganized the 'fyrd' or local militia. Henceforth, instead of a large army of peasants, who must be sent to their homes every

autumn to reap the harvest, he arranged for the maintenance of a small force that he could keep in the field as long as required. Its arms were to be supplied by fellow villagers released from the obligation to serve themselves on this condition.

Alfred, besides remodelling his army, set up fortresses along his borders, and constructed a fleet; and, because he believed that no great nation can be built on war alone, he made wise laws and appointed judges, like Charlemagne's *Missi*, to see that they were carried out. He also founded schools and tried, by translating books himself and inviting scholars to his court, to teach the men around him the glories and interests of peace. Amongst the books that he chose to set before his people in the Anglo-Saxon tongue was one called *Pastoral Care*, by the Pope Gregory who had wished to go to England as a missionary, and *The Consolations of Philosophy*, written by Boethius in prison.[1]

'I have desired,' said Alfred the Great, summing up his ideal of life, 'to leave to the men who come after me my memory in good works'; and English people to-day, descendants of both Anglo-Saxons and their Danish foes, remember with pride and affection this 'Wise King', this 'Truth-teller', this 'England's darling', as he was called in his own day, who like Charlemagne believed in patriotism, justice, and knowledge. For three-quarters of a century after Alfred's death his descendants kept alive something at any rate of this spirit of greatness, but in 978 there succeeded to the crown a boy of ten called Ethelred, who as he grew up earned for himself the nickname of 'rede-less' or 'man without advice'.

It is only fair before condemning Ethelred's conduct to point out the heavy difficulties with which he was faced; both the renewed Danish attacks on his shores, and also the jealousies and feuds of his own nobles, the Earls, or 'Ealdormen', who had carved out large estates for themselves that they ruled as petty kings. Even a statesman like Alfred would have needed all his strength and tact to unite these powerful subjects under one banner in order to lead them against the invaders. Ethelred

[1] See p. 48.

proved himself weak and without any power of leadership. The policy for which he has been chiefly remembered is his levy of a tax called 'Danegeld', or Danish gold, the sums of money that he raised from his reluctant subjects to pay the Danes to go away. As a wiser man would have realized, this really meant that he paid them to return in still larger numbers in order to obtain more money. At last, alarmed at the result of this policy, he did something still more short-sighted and less defensible: he ordered a general massacre of all the Danes in the kingdom.

The Massacre of St. Brice's Day, as this drastic measure is usually called, brought on England a bitter revenge at the hands of the angry Vikings. One well-armed force after another landed on the coasts, combining in an attack on the Anglo-Saxon King that drove him from the country to seek refuge in France. Very shortly afterwards he died, and Cnut, one of the Danish leaders, forced the country to accept him as her ruler.

This accession of a Danish foe might have been expected to undo all the work of Alfred and his sons, but fortunately for England Cnut was no reckless Viking with his heart set on war for war's sake. On the contrary, he was by nature a statesman who planned the foundation of a northern Empire with England as its central point. He maintained a bodyguard of Danish 'Hus carls' supported by a tax levied on his new subjects in order to ensure his personal safety and the fulfilment of his orders, but otherwise he showed himself an Englishman in every way he could. In especial he made large gifts to monasteries and convents, bestowed favour and lands on English nobles, and accepted the laws and customs of the country whose throne he had usurped. King of Denmark, and conqueror of England and Norway, he was anxious to ally his Empire with the nations of the Continent. With this in view he went on a pilgrimage to Rome to win the sympathy of the Pope and took a great deal of trouble to arrange foreign alliances. He himself married Emma, widow of Ethelred 'the Rede-less', and a sister of the Duke of Normandy, thus pleasing the English and bringing himself into touch with France.

The mention of Normandy brings us to a second invasion of

Northmen, for the Normans, like Cnut himself, were of Scandinavian origin. When some of the Vikings during the ninth century had sailed up the Humber and the Thames in the search of plunder and homes, others, as Charlemagne, according to the chronicler, had foreseen, preferred the harbours of the Seine, the Somme, and the Loire. In their methods they showed the same reckless daring and brutality as the early invaders of England, leaving where they passed smoking ruins of towns and churches.

Charles 'the Bald' and the feeble remnant of the Carolingian line who succeeded him were quite unable to deal with this terror, and it was only the creation of a Duchy of Paris, whose forces were commanded by a fighting hero, Odo Capet, that saved the future capital of France.

'History repeats itself,' it is sometimes said; and certainly the fate that the Carolingian 'Mayors of the Palace' had meted out to their Merovingian kings their own descendants were destined to receive again in full measure.

In 987 died Louis 'the Good-for-nothing', the last of the Carolingian kings, leaving as heir to the throne an uncle, Charles, Duke of Lorraine. In his short reign Louis had shown himself feeble and profligate; and the nobles of northern France, weary of a royal House that like Ethelred of England preferred bribing the goodwill of invaders to fighting them, readily agreed to set Charles on one side and to take in his place Hugh Capet, Duke of Paris, descendant of the famous Odo.

'Our crown goes not by inheritance,' exclaimed the Archbishop of Reims, when sanctioning the usurper's claims, 'but by wisdom and noble blood.'

The unfortunate Duke of Lorraine, captured after a vain attempt to gain his inheritance, perished in prison, and with him disappeared the Carolingians. The House of Capet, built on their ruin, survived in the direct line until the fourteenth century, and then in a younger branch, the Valois, until France in modern times was declared a republic.

Under the Capets France became not merely a collection of tribes and races as under the Merovingians, nor a section of

a European Empire as under the House of Charlemagne, but a nation as we see her to-day, with separate interests and customs to distinguish her from other nations. This process of fusion was slow, and King Hugh and his immediate successors appeared in their own day more as powerful rulers of the small district in which they lived than as overlords of France. When they marched abroad at the head of a large army, achieving victories, outlying provinces hastily recognized them as suzerains, or overlords, but when they turned their backs and went home, the commands they had issued would be ignored and defied.

Amongst the most formidable neighbours of these rulers of Paris were the Dukes of Normandy, descendants of a certain Viking chief, Rollo 'the Ganger', so called because on account of his size he could find no horse capable of bearing him and must therefore 'gang afoot'. This Rollo established himself at Rouen, and because Charles 'the Simple', one of the later Carolingians,[1] was unable to defeat him in battle he gave him instead the lands which he had won, and created him Duke, hoping that like a poacher turned gamekeeper he might prove as valuable a subject as he had been a troublesome foe. In return Rollo promised to become a Christian and to acknowledge Charles as his overlord. One of the old chronicles says that when Rollo was asked to ratify this allegiance by kissing his toe, the Viking replied indignantly, 'Not so, by God!' and that a Dane who consented to do so in his place was so rough that he tumbled Charles from his throne amid the jeers of his companions.

This is probably only a tale, for in reality Rollo married a daughter of Charles and settled down in his capital at Rouen as the model ruler of a semi-civilized state, supporting the Church, and administering such law and order that it was said when he left a massive bracelet hanging on a tree and forgot he had done so, that the ornament remained for three years without any one daring to steal it.

The rulers of the new Duchy were nearly all strong men, hard fighters, shrewd-headed, and ambitious; but the greatest of the line was undoubtedly William, an illegitimate son of Duke

[1] See Genealogy, p. 377.

Robert 'the Devil'. William's ambition was of the restless type of his Scandinavian forefathers, and his duchy in northern France seemed to him too small to match his hopes. When he noted that England was ruled by Edward 'the Confessor', a feeble son of Ethelred 'the Rede-less', who had gained the throne on the death of Cnut's two sons, he determined shrewdly that his conquests should lie in this direction. Many things favoured his cause, not the least that Edward the Confessor himself, who had been brought up in Normandy and who had no direct heirs, was quite willing to acknowledge William as his successor.

The national hero of England at the time Edward died, and who promptly proclaimed himself king, was Harold the Saxon, a member of the powerful family of Godwin that had for years controlled and owned the greater part of the land in the south.

Unfortunately for Harold the north and midlands were mainly governed by the House of Morkere and their friends, who hated the family of Godwin as dangerous rivals far more than they dreaded a Norman invasion. Thus any help that they or their tenants proffered was so slow in its rendering and so niggardly in its amount that it proved of very little use.

In addition to jealousies at home, Harold, at the moment that he heard William, Duke of Normandy, had indeed landed on the south coast, was far off in Yorkshire, where he had just succeeded in repelling an invasion of Danes at the battle of Stamford Bridge. At once he started southwards, but as he marched his army melted away, some of the men to enjoy the spoils taken from the Danes, others to attend to their harvests.

The deserters could claim that they were following the advice of the Father of Christendom, since Pope Gregory VII had given William a banner that he had blessed and had denounced Harold as a perjurer.

One of the reasons for Gregory's anger with the Saxons was that Harold had dared to appoint as Archbishop of Canterbury a bishop of whom he did not approve, while further the crafty William had persuaded him that Harold, who as a young man had been wrecked upon the Norman coast, had sworn on the bones of some holy saint that he would never seize the crown

of England. He had been a prisoner in William's power and only on this condition had he been set free to return to his native land.

The exact truth of events so long ago is hard to reach; but Harold, at any rate, fought under a cloud of suspicion and neglect, and not all his reckless daring, nor the devotion of his brothers and friends, could save his fortunes when on the field of Senlac, standing beneath his dragon-banner, he met the shock of the disciplined Norman forces. Chroniclers relate that the human wall of Saxon archers and foot-soldiers remained unshaken on the hill-side until William, setting a snare, turned in pretended flight. The ruse was successful; for as the Saxons, cheering triumphantly, descended from their position in pursuit, the invaders faced round and charged their disordered ranks. Only Harold and the men of his bodyguard remained firm under the onslaught, until at the last an arrow fired in the air struck the Saxon King in the eye as he looked up, so that he fell down dead. All resistance was now at an end and William, Duke of Normandy, was left master of the field and ruler of England.

> Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:
> Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slandered king.
> O garden blossoming out of English blood!
> O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare
> Where might made right eight hundred years ago.

These lines of Tennyson on 'Battle Abbey' recall the fact that just as the Danes and Saxons were fused into one race, so would the Norman invaders mingle with their descendants, until to after-generations William as well as Harold should appear a national hero.

In his own day 'the Conqueror' struck terror into the heart of the conquered. In 1069, when the North of England, too late to help Harold, rose in revolt, he laid waste a desert by sword and fire from the Humber to the Tees. When the Norman barons and English earls challenged his rule he threw them alike into dungeons. What seemed to the Saxon mind even more wonderful and horrible than his cruelty was the record of all the wealth of his kingdom that he caused to be compiled.

This 'Domesday Book' contained a close account not only of the great estates, lay and ecclesiastical, but of every small hamlet, and even of the number of live stock on each farm.

'So very narrowly did he cause the survey to be made,' says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 'that there was not a single hide nor a rood of land, nor (it is shameful to relate that which he thought no shame to do) was there an ox, or a cow, or a pig, passed by that was not set down in the account.'

William, it can be seen, was thorough in his methods, both in war and peace, and through this very thoroughness he won the respect if not the affection of his new subjects. Ever since the death of Cnut the Dane, England had suffered either from actual civil war or from a weak ruler who allowed his nobles to quarrel and oppress the rest of the nation. As a result of the Norman Conquest the bulk of the population found that they had gained one tyrant instead of many; and how they appreciated the change is shown by the way, all through Norman times, the middle and lower classes would help their foreign king against his turbulent baronage.

This is what a monk, an Anglo-Saxon, and therefore by race an enemy of the Conqueror, wrote about him in his chronicle:

'If any would know what manner of man King William was . . . then will we describe him as we have known him. . . . This King William . . . was a very wise and a great man, and more honoured and more powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to those good men who loved God, but severe beyond measure to those who withstood his will. . . . So also he was a very stern and wrathful man, so that none durst do anything against his will, and he kept in prison those Earls who acted against his pleasure. He removed bishops from their sees . . . and at length he spared not his own brother Odo.

'Amongst other things the good order that William established must not be forgotten; it was such that any man who was himself aught might travel over the kingdom with a bosom full of gold unmolested, and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him.'

A few lines farther on the chronicler, having mentioned the

peace that William gave, sadly relates the tyranny that was the price he extorted in exchange:

'Truly there was much trouble in these times and very great distress; he caused castles to be built and oppressed the poor.... He was given to avarice and greedily loved gain. He made large forests for the deer, and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded ..., he loved the tall stags as if he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares that they should go free. The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked nought of them; they must will all that the king willed if they would live.... Alas that any man should so exalt himself.... May Almighty God show mercy to his soul!'

The monk wrote after September 1087, when the Conqueror lay dead. Not in any Viking glory of battle against a national foe had he passed to his fathers, but in sordid struggle with his eldest son Robert who, aided by the French king, had rebelled against him. His crown was at once seized by his second son William Rufus, and with him the line of Norman kings was firmly established on the English throne.

The adventurous spirit of the Northmen had led them from Denmark and Scandinavia to the coasts of England and France; and from France their descendants, driven by the same roving instincts, had crossed the Channel in search of fresh conquests. Other Normans in the eleventh century sailed south instead of north. Their talk was of a pilgrimage to Rome, perhaps to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; but when they found that the beautiful island of Sicily had been taken by the Moslems, and that South Italy was divided up amongst a number of princes too jealous of one another to unite against any invaders either Christian or pagan, their thoughts turned quite naturally to conquest.

An Italian of this time describes the Normans as 'cunning and revengeful', and adds: 'In their eager search for wealth and dominion they despise whatever they possess and hope whatever they desire.' Such an impression was to be gained by bitter experience; but not knowing it, Maniaces, the Greek governor of that part of South Italy that still maintained its

allegiance to the Eastern Empire, invited these Northern warriors in the eleventh century to help him win back Sicily from the Saracens. They agreed, attacked in force, gained the greater part of the island, but then quarrelled with Maniaces over the spoils. Outraged by what they considered his miserly conduct, they invaded the province of Apulia, made themselves master of it, and established their capital at Melfi.

The head of the new Norman state was a certain William de Hauteville, who with several of his brothers had been leaders in the Italian expedition.

'No member of the House of Hauteville ever saw a neighbour's lands without wanting them for himself.' So says a biographer of that family; and if this was their ideal it was certainly shared by William and his numerous brothers. Since other people's possessions were not surrendered without a struggle, even in the Middle Ages, it was fortunate for them that they had the genius to win and hold what they coveted.

Pope Leo IX, like his predecessors in the See of Peter ever since Charlemagne had confirmed their right to the lands of the Exarch of Ravenna,[1] looked uneasily on invaders of Italy, and he therefore attempted to form a league with both the Emperors of the East and West that should ruin these presumptious usurpers. The league came into being, but the Pope's allies failed him, and at the battle of Civitate he was defeated and all but taken prisoner.

Here was a chance for Norman diplomacy, or, as Italians would have called it, 'cunning', and the conquerors promptly declared that it had been with the utmost reluctance that they had made war on the Father of Christendom, and begged his forgiveness. His absolution was obtained, and a few years later, through the mediation of Hildebrand, then Archdeacon of Rome and later as Pope Gregory VII, one of the leading statesmen of Europe, a compact was arranged by which the Normans recognized Pope Nicholas II as their overlord, while he, on his part, acknowledged their right to keep their conquests. Both parties to this bargain were pleased: the Pope because he had

[1] See p. 85.

gained a vassal state however unruly, the Normans since they felt that they no longer reigned on sufferance, but had a legal status in the eyes of Europe. Neither had any idea of the mine of trouble they were laying for future generations.

The fortunes of the House of Hauteville, thus established, mounted steadily. William died and was succeeded by a younger brother, Robert, nicknamed 'Guiscard' or 'the Wise'. During his reign he forced both the Greek governor and the independent princes who held the rest of South Italy to surrender their possessions, while he even carried his war against the Eastern Empire to Greece itself. Only his death put an end to this daring campaign.

Robert Guiscard, as master of South Italy, had been created Duke of Apulia; his nephew, Roger II, Count of Sicily, who inherited his statecraft and strength, induced the Pope to magnify both mainland and island into a joint kingdom, and thereafter reigned as King of Naples. 'He was a lover of justice', says a chronicler of his day, 'and a most severe avenger of crime. He hated lying . . . and never promised what he did not mean to perform. He never persecuted his private enemies, and in war endeavoured on all occasions to gain his point without shedding blood. Justice and peace were universally observed through his dominions.'

Roger II of Naples was evidently a finer and more civilized character than William of England; but in both lay that Norman capacity for establishing and maintaining order that at first seems so strange an inheritance from wild Norse ancestors. Clear-sighted, iron-nerved, an adventurer with an instinct for business, the Norman of the Early Middle Ages was just the leaven that Europe required to raise her out of the indolent depression of the 'Dark Ages' that followed the fall of Rome.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

The Emperor Lothar	840–55	Domesday Book	1086
Massacre of St. Brice's Day	1002	Pope Leo IX	1048–54
William, Duke of Normandy	1035–87	Battle of Civitate	1053
		Pope Nicholas II	1058–61
William, King of England	1066–87	Robert, Duke of Apulia	1060–85
Edward the Confessor	1042–66	Roger II, King of Naples	1130

X

FEUDALISM AND MONASTICISM

Feudalism

Wherever in the course of history men have gathered together they have gradually evolved some form of association that would ensure mutual interests. It might be merely the tribal bond of the Arabians, by which a man's relations were responsible for his acts and avenged his wrongs; it might be a council of village elders such as the Russian 'Mir', making laws for the younger men and women; it might be a group of German chiefs legislating on moonlit nights, according to the description of Tacitus, by their camp fires.

In contrast to primitive associations stands the elaborate government of Rome under Augustus and his successors; the despotic Emperor, his numberless officials, the senators with their huge estates, the struggling *curiales*, the army of legions carrying out the imperial commands from Scotland to the Euphrates. When Rome fell, her government, like a house whose foundations have collapsed, fell also. Barbarian conquerors, established in Italy and the Roman provinces, took what they liked of the laws that they found, added to them their own customs, and out of the blend evolved new codes of legislation. Yet legislation, without some method of ensuring its execution, could not save nations from invasion nor the merchant or peasant from becoming the victim of robberies and petty crimes.

Mediaeval centuries are sometimes called the Age of Feudalism, because during this time feudalism was the method gradually adopted for dealing with the problems of public life amongst all classes in nearly all the nations of Europe. There are two chief things to be remembered about feudalism—first that it was

no sudden invention but a growth out of old ideas both Roman and barbarian, and next that it was intimately connected in men's minds with the thought of land. This was natural, for after all, land or its products are as necessary to the life of every individual as air and water, and therefore the cultivation of the soil and the distribution of its fruits are the first problems with which governments are faced.

Feudalism assumed that all the land belonging to a nation belonged in the first place to that nation's king. Because he could not govern or cultivate it all himself he would parcel it out in 'fiefs' amongst the chief nobles at his court, promising them his protection, and asking in return that they should do him some specified service. This system recalls the 'villa' of Roman days with its senator, granting protection to his tenants from robbery and excessive taxation, and employing them to plough and sow, to reap his crops, and build his houses and bridges.

In the Middle Ages the service of the chief tenants was nearly always military: to appear when summoned by the king with so many horsemen and so many archers fully armed. In order to provide this force the tenant would be driven in his turn to grant out parts of his lands to other tenants, who would come when he called them with horsemen and arms that they had collected in a similar way. This process was called 'sub-infeudation'. Society thus took the form of a pyramid with the king at the apex, immediately below him his tenants-in-chief, and below them in graded ranks or layers the other tenants.

This brings us to the base of the pyramid, the people who could not fight themselves, having neither horses nor weapons, and who certainly could not lend any other soldiers to their lord's banner. Were they to receive no land?

In the Roman 'villa' the bottom strata was the slave, the chattel with no rights even over his own body. Under the system of feudalism the base of the pyramid was made up of 'serfs', men originally free, with a customary right to the land on which they lived, who had lost their freedom under feudal law and had become bound to the land, *ascripti glebae*, in such a way that if the land were sub-let or sold they would pass over to the new

owner like the trees or the grass. In return for their land, though they might not serve their master with spear or bow, they would work in his fields, build his bridges and castles, mend his roads, and guard his cattle.

From top to bottom of this pyramid of feudal society ran the binding mortar of 'tenure' and 'service'; but these were not the only links which kept feudal society together. When a tenant did 'homage' for his land, and 'with head uncovered, with belt ungirt, his sword removed', placed his hands between those of his lord, and took an oath, after the manner of the thegns of Wessex to their king, 'to love what he loved and shun what he shunned both on sea and on land', there entered into this relationship the finer bond of loyalty due from a vassal to his overlord. It was the descendant of the old Teutonic idea of the *comitatus* described by Tacitus,[1] the chief destined to lead and guide, his bodyguard pledged to follow him to death if necessary.

Put shortly, then, feudalism may be described as a system of society based upon the holding of land—a system, that is, in which a man's legal status and social rank were in the main determined by the conditions on which he held (i.e. possessed) his land. Such a system, to return to our example of the pyramid, grew not only from the apex, by the sovereign granting lands, as the King of France did to Rollo 'the Ganger', but from the middle and base as well.

One of the chief feudal powers in mediaeval times was the Church, for though abbots and bishops were not supposed to fight themselves, yet they would often have numbers of lay military tenants to bring to the help of the king or their overlord. Some of these tenants were men whom they had provided with estates, but others were landowners who had voluntarily surrendered their rights over their land in return for the protection of a local monastery or bishopric, and thus become its tenants. A large part of the Church land was, however, held, not by military or lay tenure, but in return for spiritual services, or free alms as it was called, i.e. prayers for the soul of the donor. Perhaps a landowner wished to make a pious gift

[1] See p. 16.

on his death-bed, or had committed a crime and believed that a surrender of his property to the Church would placate God. For some such reason, at any rate, he made over his land, or part of it, to the Church, which in this way accumulated great estates and endowments, free from the usual liabilities of lay tenure. All over Europe other men, and even whole villages and towns, were taking the same steps, seeking protection direct from the king, or a great lord, or an abbot or bishop, offering in return rent, services, or tolls on their merchandise.

Feudalism at its best stood for the protection of the weak in an age when armies and a police force as we understand the terms did not exist. Even when the system fell below this standard, and it often fell badly, there still remained in its appeal to loyalty an ideal above and beyond the ordinary outlook of the day, a seed of nobler feeling that with the growth of civilization and under the influence of the Church blossomed into the flower of chivalry.

> I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
> To reverence the King as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their King:
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander; no! nor listen to it,
> To honour his own word as if his God's,
> To live sweet lives in purest chastity.

Such are the vows that Tennyson puts in the mouth of Arthur's knights, who with Charlemagne and his Paladins were the heroes of mediaeval romance and dreams. King Henry the Fowler, who ruled Germany in the early part of the tenth century, instituted the Order of Knighthood, forming a bodyguard from the younger brothers and sons of his chief barons. Before they received the sword-tap on the shoulder that confirmed their new rank, these candidates for knighthood took four vows: first to speak the truth, next to serve faithfully both King and Church, thirdly never to harm a woman, and lastly never to turn their back on a foe.

Probably many of these half-barbarian young swashbucklers broke their vows freely; but some would remember and obey; and so amid the general roughness and cruelty of the age, there would be established a small leaven of gentleness and pity left to expand its influence through the coming generations. It is because of this ideal of chivalry, often eclipsed and even travestied by those who claimed to be its brightest mirrors, but never quite lost to Europe, that strong nations have been found ready to defend the rights of the weak, and men have laid down their lives to avenge the oppression of women and children.

Of the evil side of feudalism much more could be written than of the good. The system, on its military side, was intended to provide the king with an army; but if one of his tenants-in-chief chose to rebel against him, the vassals who held their lands from this tenant were much more likely to keep faith with the lord to whom they had paid immediate homage than with their sovereign. Thus often the only force on which a king could rely were the vassals of the royal domain.

Again, feudalism, by its policy of making tenants-in-chief responsible for law and order on their estates, had set up a number of petty rulers with almost absolute power. Peasants were tried for their offences in their lord's court by his bailiff or agent, and by his will they suffered death or paid their fines. Except in the case of a Charlemagne, strong enough to send out *Missi*[1] and to support them when they overrode local decisions, the lord's justice or injustice would seem a real thing to his tenants and serfs, the king's law something shadowy and far away.

As Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror had been quite as powerful as his overlord the King of France. When he came to England he was determined that none of the barons to whom he had granted estates should ever be his equal in this way. He therefore summoned all landowning men in England to a council at Salisbury in 1086, and made them take an oath of allegiance to himself before all other lords. Because he was a strong man he kept his barons true to their oath or punished

[1] See p. 95.

them, but during the reign of his grandson Stephen, who disputed the English throne with his cousin Matilda and therefore tried to buy the support of the military class by gifts and concessions, the vices of feudalism ran almost unchecked.

'They had done homage to him and sworn oaths,' says the Anglo-Saxon chronicler, 'but they no faith kept . . . for every rich man built his castles and defended them against him, and they filled the land with castles. . . . Then they took these whom they suspected to have any goods by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable. . . . I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds and of all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king and ever grew worse and worse.'

Stephen was a weak ruler struggling with a civil war; so that it might be argued that no system of government could have worked well under such auspices; but if we turn to the normal life of the peasant folk on the estates of the monastery of Mont St. Michael in the thirteenth century, we shall see that the humble tenants at the base of the feudal pyramid paid dearly enough for the protection of their overlords.

'In June the peasants must cut and pile the hay and carry it to the manor-house . . . in August they must reap and carry in the Convent grain, their own grain lies exposed to wind and rain. . . . On the Nativity of the Virgin the villein owes the pork due, one pig in eight . . . at Xmas the fowl fine and good . . . on Palm Sunday the sheep due . . . at Easter he must plough, sow, and harrow. When there is building the tenant must bring stone and serve the masons . . . he must also haul the convent wood for two deniers a day. If he sells his land he owes his lord a thirteenth of its value, if he marries his daughter outside the lord's demense he pays a fine,—he must grind his grain at the lord's mill and bake his bread at the lord's oven, where the customary charges never satisfy the servants.'

Certainly the peasant of the Middle Ages can have had little time to lament even his own misery. Perhaps to keep his hovel from fire and pillage and his family from starvation was all to which he often aspired.

'War', it has been said, 'was the law of the feudal world', and all over Europe the moat-girt castles of powerful barons, and walled towns and villages sprang up as a witness to the turbulent state of society during these centuries. To some natures this atmosphere of violence of course appealed.

I, Sirs, am for war,
Peace giveth me pain,
No other creed will hold me again.
On Monday, on Tuesday,—whenever you will,
Day, week, month, or year, are the same to me still.

So sang a Provençal baron of the twelfth century, and we find an echo of his spirit in Spain as late as the fifteenth, when a certain noble, sighing for the joys and spoils of civil war, remarked, 'I would there were many kings in Castile for then I should be one of them.'

The Church, endeavouring to cope with the spirit of anarchy, succeeded in establishing on different occasions a 'Truce of God', somewhat resembling the 'Sacred Months' devised by the Arabs for a like purpose. From Wednesday to Monday, and during certain seasons of the year, such as Advent or Lent, war was completely forbidden under ecclesiastical censure, while at no time were priests, labourers, women, or children to be molested.

The defect of such reforms lay in the absence of machinery to enforce them; and feudalism, the system by which in practice the few lived at the expense of the many, continued to flourish until foreign adventure, such as the Crusades, absorbed some of its chief supporters, and civilization and humanity succeeded in building up new foundations of society to take its place. It would seem as if the lessons of good government had to be learned in a hard school, generally through bitter experience on the part of the governed.

Monasticism

If the study of feudalism is necessary to a knowledge of the material life of the Middle Ages, its spirit is equally a closed book without an understanding of monasticism. What induced

men and women, not just a few devout souls, but thousands of ordinary people of all nations and classes from the prince to the serf to forsake the world for the cloister; and, far from regretting this sacrifice, to maintain with obvious sincerity that they had chosen the better part? If we would realize the mediaeval mind we must find an answer to this question.

Turning to the earliest days of monasticism, when the 'Fathers of the Church' sought hermits' cells, we recall the shrinking of finer natures from the brutality and lust of pagan society; the intense conviction that the way to draw nearer God was to shut out the world; the desire of a Simon Stylites to make the thoughtless mind by the sight of his self-inflicted penance think for a moment at any rate of a future Heaven and Hell.

Motives such as these continued to inspire the enthusiastic Christian throughout the Dark Ages following the fall of Rome; but, as Europe became outwardly converted to the Catholic Faith, it was not paganism from which the monk fled, but the mockery of his own beliefs that he found in the lives of so-called Christians. The corruption of imperial courts, even those of a Constantine or Charlemagne, the cunning cruelty of a baptized Clovis, the ruthless selfishness of a feudal baron or Norman adventurer fighting in the name of Christ: all these were hard to reconcile with a gospel of poverty, gentleness, and brotherhood.

Even the light of pure ideals once held aloft by the Church had begun to burn dim; for men are usually tolerant of evils to which they are accustomed, and the priest who had grown up amid barbarian invasions was inclined to look on the coarseness and violence that they bred as a natural side of life. As a rule he continued to maintain a slightly higher standard of conduct than his parishioners, but sometimes he fell to their level or below.

The great danger to the Church, however, was, as always in her history, not the hardships that she encountered but the prosperity. The bishops, 'overseers' responsible for the discipline and well-being of their dioceses, became in the Middle Ages, by reason of their very power and influence, too often the

servants of earthly rulers rather than of God. Far better educated and disciplined than the laymen, experienced in diocesan affairs, without ties of wife and family, since the Church law forbade the clergy to marry, they were selected by kings for responsible office in the state. Usually they proved the wisdom of his choice through their gifts of administration and loyalty, but the effect on the Church of adding political to ecclesiastical power proved disastrous in the end.

Their great landed wealth made the bishops feudal barons, while bishoprics in their turn came to be regarded as offices at the disposal of the king; a bad king would parcel them out amongst his favourites or sell them to the highest bidders, heedless of their moral character. Thus crept into the Church the sin of 'simony' or 'traffic in holy things' so strongly condemned by the first Apostles, and, following hard on the heels of simony, the worldliness born of the temptations of wealth and power. The bishop who was numbered amongst a feudal baronage and entertained a lax nobility at his palace was little likely to be shocked at priests convicted of ignorance or immorality, or to spend his time in trying to reform their habits.

It was, then, not only in horror of the world, but in reproach of the Church herself that the monk turned to the idea of separation from man and communion with God. In the earliest days of monasticism each hermit followed his special theory of prayer and self-discipline; he would gather round him small communities of disciples, and these would remain or go away to form other communities as they chose, a lack of system that often resulted in unhealthy fanaticism or useless idleness.

In the sixth century an Italian monk, Benedict of Nursia (480–543), compiled a set of regulations for his followers, which, under the name of 'the rule of Benedict', became the standard Code of monastic life for all Western Christendom. Benedict demanded of his monks a 'novitiate' of twelve months during which they could test their call to a life of continual sacrifice. At the end of this time, if the novice still continued resolute in his intention and was approved by the monastic authorities, he was accepted into the brotherhood by taking the perpetual vows of poverty,

obedience, and chastity, the three conditions of life most hostile to the lust of possession, turbulence, and sensuality that dominated the Middle Ages. To these vows were added the obligation of manual labour—seven hours work a day in addition to the recitation of prayers enjoined on the community.

The faithful Benedictine at least could never be accused of idleness, and to the civilizing influence of the 'regulars', as the monks were called because they obeyed a rule (*regula*), in contrast to the 'secular' priests who lived in the world, Europe owed an immense debt of gratitude.

Sometimes it is said contemptuously that the monks of the Middle Ages chose beautiful sites on which to found luxurious homes. Certainly they selected as a rule the neighbourhood of rivers and lakes, water being a prime necessity of life, and in such neighbourhoods raised chapels and monasteries that have become the architectural wonder of the world. Yet many of these wonders began in a circle of wooden huts built on a reclaimed marsh, and it was the labour of the followers of St. Benedict that replaced wood by stone and swamps by gardens and farms.

Where the barbarian or feudal anarchist burned and destroyed, the monk of the Middle Ages brought back the barren soil to pasturage or tillage; and just as he weeded, sowed, and planted as part of his obligation to God, so from the produce of his labours he provided for the destitute at his gate, or in his cloister schools supplied the ignorant with the rudiments of knowledge and culture. The monasteries were centres of mediaeval life, not, like the castles, of death. In his quiet cell the monk chronicler became an historian; the copyist reproduced with careful affection decaying manuscripts; the illuminator made careful pictures of his day; the chemist concocted strange healing medicines, or in his crucibles developed wondrous colours.

'Good is it for us to dwell here, where man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more quickly, treads more cautiously, rests more securely, is absolved more easily, and rewarded more plenteously.' This is the saying of St. Bernard, one of the later

monastic reformers; and his ideal was the general conception of the best life possible as understood in the Middle Ages. To the monasteries flocked the devout seeking a home of prayer; but also the student or artist unable to follow his bent in the turbulent world, and the man who despised or feared the atmosphere of war. Even the feudal baron would pause in his quarrels to make some pious gift to abbey or priory, a tribute to a faith he admired but was too weak to practise. Sometimes he came in later life, a penitent who, toiling like his serf, sought in the cloister the salvation of his soul. 'In the monasteries,' says a mediaeval German, 'one saw Counts cooking in the kitchen and Margraves leading their pigs out to feed.'

Monasticism, with its belief in brotherhood, was a leveller of class distinctions; but, like the rest of the Church, it found in the popular enthusiasm it aroused the path of temptation. Men, we have seen, entered the cloister for other reasons than pure devotion to God; and the rule of Benedict proving too strict they yielded secretly to sins that perhaps were not checked or reproved because abbots in time ceased to be saints and became, like the bishops, feudal landlords with worldly interests. In this way vice and laziness were allowed to spread and cling like bindweed.

Throughout the Middle Ages there were times of corruption and failure amongst the monastic Orders, followed by waves of sweeping reform and earnest endeavour, when once again the Cross was raised as an emblem of sacrifice and drew the more spiritual of men unto it.

In 910 the monastery of Cluni was founded in Burgundy, and, freed from the jurisdiction of local bishops by being placed under the direct control of the Pope, was able to establish a reformed Benedictine Order. Its abbot was recognized not only as the superior of the monastery at Cluni but also of 'daughter' houses that sprang up all over Europe subject to his discipline and rule.

Other monastic Orders founded shortly after this date were those of the Carthusians and Cistercians.

In their desire to combat worldliness the early Carthusians,

or monks of the monastery of Chartreux, carried on unceasing war against the pleasures of the world. Strict fasting for eight months in the year; one meal a day eaten in silence and alone; no conversation with other brethren save at a weekly meeting; this was the background to a life of toil and prayer.

The monastery of Citeaux in southern France, from which the Cistercians take their name, was another attempt to live in the world but not of it. 'The White Monks', so called from the colour of their woollen frocks, sought solitudes in which to build their houses. Their churches and monasteries remain among the glories of architecture; but through fear of riches they refused to place in them crosses of gold and silver or to allow their priests to wear embroidered vestments. No Cistercian might recite the service of the Mass for money or be paid for the cure of souls. With his hands he must work for his meagre fare, remembering always to give God thanks for the complete self-renunciation to which he was pledged by his Order.

Chief amongst the Cistercian saints is Bernard (1090–1153), a Burgundian noble, who in 1115 founded a daughter monastery of his Order at Clairvaux, and as its head became one of the leaders of mediaeval thought. When he was only twenty he had appeared before the Abbot of Citeaux with a band of companions, relations and friends whom his eloquence had persuaded to enter the monastery with him. Throughout his life this power over others and his fearlessness in making use of this influence were his most vivid characteristics. 'His speech', wrote some one who knew him, 'was suited to his audience . . . to country-folk he spoke as though born and bred in the country, and so to other classes as though he had been always occupied with their business. He adapted himself to all, desiring to gain all for Christ.'

In these last words lie his mission and the secret of his success. Never was his eloquence exerted for himself, and so men who wished to criticize were overborne by his single-minded sincerity. Severe to his own shortcomings, gentle and humble to his brethren, ready to accept reproof or to undertake the meanest task, Bernard was fierce and implacable to the man or the

conditions that seemed to him to stand in the way of God's will.

'I grieve over thee, my son Geoffrey,' he wrote to a young monk who had fled the austerities of Clairvaux.... 'How could you, who were called by God, follow the Devil, recalling thee? ... Turn back, I say, before the abyss swallows thee ... before bound hand and foot thou art cast into outer darkness ... shut in with the darkness of death.'

To the ruler of France he sent a letter of reproof ending with the words: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God even for thee, O King!' and his audacity, instead of working his ruin, brought the leading clergy and statesmen of Europe to the cells of Clairvaux as if to some oracle's temple, to learn the will of God.

From his cell St. Bernard preached the Second Crusade, reformed abuses in the Church, deposed an Anti-Pope, and denounced heretics. In his distrust of human reason, trying to free itself from some of the dogmatic assertions of early Christian thought, he represented the narrow outlook of his age: but in his love of God and through God of humanity he typifies the spiritual charm that like a thread of gold runs through all the dross of hardness and treachery in the mediaeval mind.

'Do not grieve,' he wrote to the parents of a novice ... 'he goes to God but you do not lose him ... rather through him you gain many sons, for all of us who belong to Clairvaux have taken him to be a brother and you to be our parents.'

To St. Bernard self-renunciation meant self-realization, the laying down of a life to find it again purified and enriched; and this was the ideal of monasticism, often misunderstood and discredited by its weaker followers, like all ideals, but yet the glory of its saints.

XI

THE INVESTITURE QUESTION

We have said that in 'the Oath of Strasbourg'[1] it was possible to distinguish the infant nations of France and Germany. This is true—yet Germany, though distinct from her neighbours, was to remain all through the Middle Ages rather an agglomeration of states than a nation as we understand the word to-day.

One reason for the absence of any common policy and ambitions was that Charlemagne, though he had conquered the Saxons and other Germanic tribes, had never succeeded in welding them into one people. Under his successors the different races easily slipped back into regarding themselves rather as Saxons, Franconians, or Bavarians than as Germans: indeed the Bohemians relapsed into heathendom and became once more altogether uncivilized.

This instinct for separation was aided by the feudal system, since rebel tenants-in-chiefs could count on provincial feeling to support them against the king their overlord. It is hardly surprising, then, if the struggle that broke out in Germany as elsewhere in Europe between rulers and their feudal baronage was decided there in favour of the baronage.

Perhaps if some strong king could have given his undivided attention to the problem he might have succeeded, like William I of England, in making himself real master of all Germany; but unfortunately the rulers of the German kingdom were never free from foreign wars. Just as the Norsemen had descended on the coasts of France, so Danes, Slavs, and Hungarians were a constant menace to the civilization of Germany; hordes of these barbarians breaking over the frontiers every year, and even pillaging districts as far west as the Rhine.

German kings, in consequence of this external menace, had to

[1] See p. 103.

rely for the defence of their frontiers upon the military power of their great vassals. They were even forced to create large estates called 'Marks' (march-lands) upon their northern and eastern borders to act as national bulwarks. Over these ruled 'Margraves' ('grafs' or Counts of the Mark) with a large measure of independence. Modern Prussia was once the Mark of Brandenburg, a war state created against the Slav; Austria the Mark placed in the east between Bavaria and the Hungarians; Schleswig the Mark established to hold back the Danes.

Yet another cause told for disruption: the fact that when the Carolingian line came to an end in Germany early in the tenth century the practice sprang up of electing kings from among the chief princes and dukes. Though this plan worked well if the electors made an honest choice, yet it gave the feudal baronage a weapon, on the other hand, if they wished to strike a bargain with a would-be ruler or to appoint a weakling whose authority they could undermine.

The first of the elected kings of Germany was Conrad of Franconia, during whose reign the feudal system took strong root, and who ruled rather through his barons than in opposition to their wishes. On his death-bed he showed his honest desire for the welfare of Germany. 'I know,' he declared, 'that no man is worthier to sit on my throne than my enemy Henry of Saxony. . . .When I am dead, take him the crown and the sacred lance, the golden armlet, the sword, and the purple mantle of the old kings.' The princes, who followed his advice, found their new ruler out hawking on the mountain side, and under the nickname Henry 'the Fowler' he became their king and one of Germany's national heroes.

In his untiring struggle against invaders Henry I recalls the Anglo-Saxon Alfred 'the Great', and like Alfred he was at first forced to fly before his enemies. To the disgust of the great dukes he bought a nine years' peace from the Hungarians by paying tribute; but when the enemy went away he at once began to build castles or 'burgs', and filled them with soldiers under the command of 'burgraves'. These castles were placed all

along the frontiers, and gradually villages and towns gathered round them for safety.

In the tenth year the Hungarians came as usual to ask for the tribute money, but Henry ordered a dead dog to be thrown at their messenger's feet.

'In future this is all your master will get from us,' he exclaimed, and the answer, as he expected, provoked an immediate invasion. Instead of being able to lay waste the countryside as of old, however, the Hungarians now found 'burgs' well fortified and provisioned that they could neither take nor leave with safety in their rear. When at last they met Henry in pitched battle, they broke and fled before his onslaught, declaring that the golden banner of St. Michael, carried at the head of his troops, had by some wizardry contrived their ruin.

Besides repulsing invaders, Henry the Fowler imposed his will to a considerable extent over his rebellious baronage. In another chapter[1] we have noticed how he instituted 'the order of knighthood' as a way of harnessing to his service the restless energy of the younger sons of the nobles: he also tried to strengthen the middle classes as a counterpoise to the baronage by encouraging the construction of walled towns for the protection of merchants, while he would hold his councils rather in towns than in the woods like his predecessors, in order to attract people to settle there. Many of the Marks owe their origin to Henry's policy of strengthening the border provinces; and in this and in his determination to subdue the Hungarians he found an able successor in his son Otto I.

Otto's reign might from one aspect be called a history of wars. First there were foreign wars—the subjugation of Denmark, whose king became a German vassal; the reconquest and conversion of Bohemia; and also a series of campaigns against the Hungarians, resulting at last in 955 in a victory at Augsburg so complete that never again the hated invaders dared to cross the border save in marauding bands.

But besides fighting against foreign neighbours Otto had a continual struggle at home in order to reassert the authority of

[1] See p. 120.

the crown over the great duchies such as Lotharingia and Bavaria. When he was able to do so he would replace the most turbulent of the dukes by members of his own family, or he would make gifts of large estates to bishops, hoping in this way to provide himself with loyal tenants-in-chief. In this, however, he was not successful, for he found the feudal bishops amongst his worst enemies; so that he turned at last for help to the new type of Churchman, bred by the Cluniac reform movement—men of learning and culture, monks in their religious observances, statesmen in their outlook. These were at one with him in his desire for a united Germany and a purer Church; but Otto was faced by a great problem when he wished to reform and control his bishops. How far were the German clergy under his jurisdiction? How far did they owe obedience only to Rome, as they claimed if he tried to exert his authority over them?

Charlemagne had been able to deal easily with such difficulties, for the Pope had been his ally, almost it might be said his vassal, and so they could have but one mind on Church matters. By the time of Otto the Great, however, German kings had long ceased to be emperors, and the imperial title, bandied about from one Italian prince to another, had become tarnished in the world's eyes. Was it worth while, then, for a German king to regain this title in order to gain control over the See of St. Peter?

Students of history, able to test mediaeval policy by its ultimate results, will answer 'No', seeing that German kings would have done well to resist the will-of-the-wisp lure of the crowns of Lombardy and Rome; but to Otto the question of interference in Italy bore a very different aspect. Too great to be dazzled by the title of Emperor, too busy to invade Italy merely for the sake of forcing the Pope to become his ally, Otto found himself faced by the necessity of choosing whether he would make himself lord of the lands on the other side of the Alps or see one of his most powerful subjects, the Duke of Bavaria, do so instead.

The occasion of this choice was the murder of Count Lothair of Provence, one of the claimants to the throne of Italy. Lothair's widow, Adelaide, a Burgundian princess, appealed to Germany

to avenge her wrongs—a piece of knight-errantry with such prospects of profit that several of the German princes and notably the Duke of Bavaria, whose lands lay just to the north of the Alps, were only too willing to undertake it. In 951 Otto the Great, anticipating their ambitions, crossed the Alps with an army, rescued Adelaide from her husband's murderer, married her himself, and was crowned King of Italy at Pavia.

Recalled to Germany by foreign invasions, he appeared again in Italy ten years later, and in February 962 was crowned Emperor by the Pope at Rome. His successors, dropping the title 'King of Germany', claimed henceforth to be 'Kings of the Romans' on their election and, after their coronation by the Pope, 'Holy Roman Emperors'—temporal overlords of Christendom, as the Popes claimed to be spiritual viceroys.

This coronation of Otto the Great was a turning-point in the history of Germany, though at the time it caused little stir. To Otto himself it was merely the culminating success of his career, enabling him to undertake without interference the reform of the German Church that he had planned, and also to issue a charter that, while confirming the Popes in their temporal possessions, insisted that they should take an oath of allegiance to the Emperor before their consecration. By this measure the Papacy became in the eyes of Europe merely the chief see in the Emperor's dominions; and under Otto's immediate successors this supremacy was not seriously disputed by the Popes themselves. In some cases they were German nominees, ready to acknowledge the sceptre that secured their election; but, even where this was not the case, there was a general feeling that Rome had less to fear from the tyranny of Emperors beyond the Alps than from the encroachments of the petty lords of Italy.

The Dukes of Spoletum, Counts of Tuscany, and Barons of the Roman Campagna had no respect at all for the head of Christendom except as a pawn in their political moves. One of the most unscrupulous and dissolute families in the vicinity of Rome, the Crescentii, who claimed the title of Patrician, once granted by Eastern Emperors to Italian viceroys, secured the Papacy for three successive members of their house. Under

the last of these, Benedict IX, a boy of twelve at the time of his election, vice and tyranny walked through the streets of Rome rampant and unashamed. The young Pope, described by a contemporary as 'a captain of thieves and brigands', did not scruple to crown his sins by selling his holy office in a moment of danger to another of his family. As his excesses had already led the people of Rome to set up an Anti-Pope, and as he himself withdrew his abdication very shortly, the disgraceful state of affairs culminated in three Popes, each denouncing one another, and each arming his followers for battle in the streets.

The interference of the Emperor Henry III (a member of the Salian House of Saxony) was welcomed on all sides, and at the Synod of Sutri the rival Popes were all deposed and a German bishop, chosen by the Emperor, elected in their place.

Henry III has been described by a modern historian as 'the strongest Prince that Europe had seen since Charlemagne'. Not only did he succeed in subduing the unruly Bohemians and Hungarians, but he also built Germany into the temporary semblance of a nation, mastering her baronage and purifying her Church. His influence over Italy was wholly for her good; but by the irony of fate his cousin Bruno, whom he nominated to the See of St. Peter under the name of Leo IX, was destined to lay the foundations of a Papacy independent of German control.

Bruno himself insisted that he should be elected legally by the clergy and people of Rome and, though of royal blood, he entered the city barefoot as a penitent. Unlike the haughty Roman nobles to whom the title 'Pope' had merely seemed an extra means of obtaining worldly honour and pleasure, he remained after his consecration gentle and accessible to his inferiors, and devoted his whole time to the work of reform. At his first council he strongly condemned the sin of simony, and he insisted on the celibacy of the clergy as the only way to free them from worldly distractions and ambitions.

In order that his message might not seem intended for Italy alone, he made long journeys through Germany and France. Everywhere he went he preached the purified ideal of the Church upheld by the monks of Cluni; but side by side with this he and

his successors set another vision that they strove to realize, the predominance of the Papacy in Italy as a temporal power.

It was Leo IX who, dreading the Norman settlements in southern Italy as a menace to the states of the Church, formed a league against the invaders, but after his defeat at their hands, followed shortly by his death, his successors, as we have seen, wisely concluded a peace that left them feudal overlords of Apulia and Calabria.[1] Realizing that to dominate the affairs of the peninsula they must remain at home, future Popes sent ambassadors called 'Legates' to express and explain their will in foreign countries; while in 1059, in a further effort towards independence, Pope Nicholas II revolutionized the method of papal elections. Popes, it was decreed, were no longer to be chosen by the voice of the people and clergy of Rome generally, but only by the 'Cardinals', that is, the principal bishops of the city sitting in secret conclave. This body, the College of Cardinals, was to be free of imperial interference.

Behind Pope Nicholas, in this daring policy of independence, stood one of the most powerful figures of his age, Hildebrand, Archdeacon of Rome. The son of a village carpenter, small, ill formed, insignificant in appearance, he possessed the shrewd, practical mind and indomitable will of the born ruler of men. It is said that in boyhood his companions found him tracing with the chips and shavings of his father's workshop the words, 'I shall reign from sea to sea', yet he began his career by deliberately accepting exile with the best of the Popes deposed by the Council of Sutri; and it was Leo IX, who, hearing of his genius, found him and brought him back to Rome.

Gradually not only successive Popes but the city itself grew to lean upon his strength, and when in 1073 the Holy See was left vacant, a general cry arose from the populace: 'Hildebrand is Pope. . . . It is the will of St. Peter!'

Taking the name of Gregory VII, Hildebrand reluctantly, if we are to believe his own account, accepted the headship of the Church. Perhaps, knowing how different was his ideal of the office from its reality, he momentarily trembled at the task he

[1] See p. 115

had set himself; but once enthroned there was no weakness in his manner to the world.

In his ears the words of Christ, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church', could never be reconciled with vassalage to any temporal ruler. To St. Peter and his successors, not to emperors or kings, had been given the power to bind or loose, and Gregory's interpretation of this text did not even admit of two co-equal powers ruling Christendom by their alliance. 'Human pride has created the power of kings,' he declared, 'God's mercy has created the power of bishops . . . the Pope is master of Emperors and is rendered holy by the merits of his predecessor St. Peter. The Roman Church has never erred and Holy Scripture proves that it never can err. To resist it is to resist God.'

Such a point of view, if put to any practical test, was sure to encounter firm if not violent opposition. Thus, when Gregory demanded from William of Normandy the oath of fealty alleged to have been promised by the latter to Alexander II in return for the Papal blessing upon the conquest of England, the Conqueror replied by sending rich gifts in token of his gratitude for papal support, but supplemented them with a message as uncompromising as the Pope's ideal: 'I have not sworn, nor will I swear fealty, which was never sworn by any of my predecessors to yours.' William thereupon proceeded to dispose of benefices and bishoprics in his new kingdom as he chose, and even went so far as to forbid the recognition of any new Pope within his dominions without his leave, or the publication of papal letters and decrees that had not received his sanction.

Perhaps if England had been nearer to Italy, or if William had misused his authority instead of reforming the English Church, Gregory VII might have taken up the gauntlet of defiance thus thrown at his feet. Instead he remained on friendly terms with William; and it was in the Empire, not in England, that the struggle between Church and State began.

The Emperor Henry III, who had summoned the Synod of Sutri, had been a great ruler, great enough even to have effected a satisfactory compromise with Hildebrand, but, though before

he died he succeeded in securing his crown for his son Henry, a boy of six, he could not bequeath him strength of character or statesmanship. Thus from his death, in 1056, the fortunes of his House and Empire slowly waned.

It is difficult to estimate the natural gifts of the new ruler of Germany, for an unhappy upbringing warped his outlook and affections. Left at first under the guardianship of his mother, the Empress Agnes, the young Henry IV was enticed at the age of eleven on board a ship belonging to Anno, the ambitious Archbishop of Cologne. While he was still admiring her wonders the ship set sail up the Rhine, and though the boy plunged overboard in an effort to escape his kidnappers he was rescued and brought back. For the next four years he remained first the pupil of Archbishop Anno, who punished him for the slightest fault with harsh cruelty and deprived him of all companionship of his own age, and then of Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, who indulged his every whim and passion.

At length, at the age of fifteen, handsome and kingly in appearance, but utterly uncontrolled and dissolute in his way of life, Henry was declared of age to govern for himself, and straightway began to alienate his barons and people. He had been married against his wish to the plain daughter of one of his Margraves, and expressed his indignation by ill-treating and neglecting her, to the wrath of her powerful relations: he also built castles on the hill-tops in Saxony, from which his troops oppressed the countryside: but the sin for which he was destined to be called to account was his flagrant misuse of his power over the German Church.

At first, when reproved by the Pope for selling bishoprics and benefices, Henry was apologetic in his letters; but he had no real intention of amending his ways and soon began to chafe openly at Roman criticism and threats. At last acrimonious disputes came to a head in what is called the 'Investiture Question', and because it is a problem that affected the whole relations of Church and State in the eleventh century it is important to understand what it exactly meant to Europe.

Investiture was the ceremony by which a temporal ruler, such

as a king, transferred to a newly chosen Church official, such as a bishop, the lands and rights belonging to his office. The king would present the bishop with a ring and crozier and the bishop in return would place his hands between those of the king and do him homage like a lay tenant-in-chief.

The Roman See declared that it was not fitting for hands sacred to the service of God at His altar to be placed in submission between those that a temporal ruler had stained with the blood of war. Behind this figure of speech lay the real reason, the implication that if the ring and crozier were to be taken as symbols of lands and offices, bishops would tend to regard these temporal possessions as the chief things in their lives, and the oath of homage they gave in exchange as more important than their vow to do God's service.

Gregory VII believed that he could not reform the Church unless he could detach its officials from dependence on lay rulers who could bribe or intimidate them; and in the age in which he lived he could show that for every William of Normandy ready to 'invest' good churchmen there were a hundred kings or petty rulers who only cared about good tenants, that is, landlords who would supply them faithfully with soldiers and weapons.

As a counter argument temporal rulers maintained that churchmen who accepted lands and offices were lay tenants in this respect, whatever Popes might choose to call them. The king who lost the power of investing his bishops lost control over wealthy and important subjects, and since he would also lose the right to refuse investiture he might find his principal bishoprics in the hands of disloyal rebels or of foreigners about whom he knew nothing.

The whole question was complicated, largely because there was so much truth on both sides; Gregory, however, forced the issue, and early in 1075, in a Synod held at Rome, put forth the famous decree by which lay investiture was henceforth sternly forbidden. Henry IV, on the other hand, spoiled his case by his wild disregard of justice. In the same year he appointed a new archbishop to the important See of Milan and invested him without consulting Gregory VII at all; he further proceeded to appoint

two unknown foreigners to Italian bishoprics. Angry at the letter of remonstrance which these acts aroused he called a church council at Worms in the following year, and there induced the majority of German bishops very reluctantly to declare Gregory deposed.

'Henry, King not by usurpation but by God's grace, to Hildebrand, henceforth no Pope but false monk. . . .' Thus began his next letter to the Roman pontiff, to which Hildebrand replied by excommunicating his deposer.

'Blessed Peter . . . as thy representative I have received from God the power to bind and loose in Heaven and on earth. For the honour and security of thy Church, in the name of God Almighty, I prohibit Henry the King, son of Henry the Emperor, . . . from ruling Germany and Italy. I release all Christians from the oaths of fealty they may have taken to him, and I order that no one shall obey him.'

This decree provided occasion for all German nobles whom Henry IV had alienated to gather under the banner of the papal legate, and for the oppressed Saxon countryside to renew the serious revolt which had broken out two years before. Even the German bishops grew frightened of the part they had played in deposing Gregory, so that the once-powerful ruler found himself looked upon as an outlaw with scarcely a real friend, save the wife he had ill-treated, and no hope save submission. In the winter of 1066, as an old story tells, when the mountains were frozen hard with snow and ice, he and his wife and one attendant crossed the Alps on sledges, and sought the Pope in his castle of Canossa, built amidst the highest ridges of the Apennines.

Gregory coldly refused him audience. The King, he intimated, might declare that he was repentant, he had done so often in the past, but words were not deeds. Putting aside his royal robes and clad in a penitent's woollen tunic, Henry to show his sincerity remained barefoot for three days like a beggar, in the castle yard. Then only on the entreaty of some Italian friends was he admitted to the presence of the Pope, who at his cry of 'Holy Father, spare me!' raised him up and gave him formal forgiveness.

The scene at Canossa is so dramatic in its display of Hildebrand's triumph and the Emperor's humiliation that it has lived in the world's memory: yet it was no closing act in their struggle, but merely an episode that passed and left little mark. Henry IV, as soon as he could win himself a following in Germany and Italy, returned to the practice of lay investiture, and Gregory VII, who had never believed in his sincerity, continued to denounce him and plan the coronation of rival emperors.

Imperial ambitions at last reached their height, for Henry IV succeeded in inducing German and Italian bishops to depose Gregory once more and even appoint an Anti-Pope, in whose name imperial armies ravaged Lombardy, forced their way as far south as Rome, and besieged Hildebrand in the castle of St. Angelo. From this predicament he was rescued by the Normans of South Italy under Robert Guiscard; but these ruthless vassals of the Church massacred and looted the Holy City directly they had scaled the walls, and when they turned homewards, carrying Gregory VII with them, they left half Rome in ruins.

Gregory VII died not long afterwards, homeless and deposed, but with unshaken confidence in the righteousness of his cause. 'I have loved justice and hated iniquity,' he said, during his last illness, 'therefore I die in exile.' 'In exile thou couldst not die,' replied a bishop standing at his bedside. 'Vicar of Christ and His Apostles, thou hast received the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Future history was to show that Hildebrand in defeat had achieved more than his rival in victory.

Henry IV outlived his enemy by twenty-one years, but they were bitter with disillusionment. Harassed by Gregory VII's successors who continued to advocate papal supremacy, faced by one rebellion after another in Germany and Italy, Henry IV yielded at last to weariness and old age, when he found his sons had become leaders of the forces most hostile to him. Even in his submission to their demands he found no peace, for he was thrust into prison, compelled to abdicate, and left to die miserably of starvation and neglect.

In the reign of his son, Henry V, a compromise on the 'Investiture Question' was arranged between Church and Empire. By the Concordat of Worms it was agreed first that rulers should renounce their claim to invest bishops and abbots with the ring and crozier. These were to be given by representatives of the Church to candidates chosen and approved by them; but the second point of importance was that this ceremony must take place in the presence of the king or his representative, to whom the new bishop or abbot would at once do homage for his lands and offices.

Almost a similar settlement had been arrived at between Church and State in England some fifteen years earlier, arising out of the refusal of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, to do homage to Henry I, the Conqueror's son. In this case there was no clash of bitterness and dislike, for the old archbishop was perfectly loyal to the king at heart, though prepared to go to the stake on a matter of conscience, as this question had become to earnest churchmen. His master, on his side, respected Anselm's saintly character and only wished to safeguard his royal rights over all his subjects.

Compromise was therefore a matter of rejoicing on both sides, and with the decisions of the Council at Worms investiture ceased to be a vital problem. Its importance lies in the fact that it was one of the first battles between Church and State and, though a compromise, yet a formal victory for the Church. The dependence of the Papacy on the imperial government that Europe had considered natural in the days of Charlemagne, or of Otto the Great, was a thing of the past, for the acknowledgement of ecclesiastical freedom from lay supremacy, one of the main issues for which Hildebrand had struggled, schemed, and died, had been won by his successors following in his steps.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

Pope Benedict IX	1033–48
Pope Leo IX	1048–54
Pope Nicholas II	1058–61

XII

THE EARLY CRUSADES

THE imperial standards of Constantinople were designed with a two-headed eagle typifying Constantine's rule over the kingdoms of East and West. Towards the end of the eleventh century this emblem had become more symbolic of the Emperor's anxious outlook upon hostile neighbours. With Asia Minor practically lost by the establishment of a Mahometan dynasty at Nicea within one hundred miles of the Christian capital, with the Bulgarians at the gates of Adrianople, and the Normans and the Popes in possession of his Greek patrimony in Italy, Alexius Commenus, when he ascended the throne of the Caesars, found himself master of an attenuated Empire, consisting mainly of strips of Grecian seaboard.

Yet in spite of her shorn territories Constantinople remained the greatest city in Europe, not merely in her magnificent site and architecture, nor even in her commerce, but in the hold she preserved over the imagination of men.

Athanaric the Goth had exclaimed that the ruler of Constantinople must be a god: eleventh-century Europe accepted him as mortal, but still crowned the lord of so great a city with a halo of awe. It was Constantinople that had won the Russians, the Bulgars, and the Slavs from heathenism to Christianity, not to the Catholicism of Western Europe but the Greek interpretation of the Christian faith called by its believers the 'orthodox'. It was Constantinople whose gold coin, 'the byzant', was recognized as the medium of exchange between merchants of all nations. It was Constantinople again, her wealth, her palaces, her glory of pomp and government, that drew Russian, Norse, and Slav adventurers to serve as mercenaries in the Emperor's

army, just as auxiliaries had clamoured of old to join the Roman eagles. Amongst the 'Varangar' bodyguard, responsible for the safety of the Emperor's person, were to be found at one time many followers of Harold the Saxon, who, escaping from a conquered England, gladly entered the service of a new master to whom the name 'Norman' was also anathema.

Alexius Commenus was in character like his Empire—a shrinkage from the dimensions of former days. There was nothing of the practical genius of a Constantine in his unscrupulous ability to mould small things to his advantage; nothing of the heroic Charlemagne in his eminently calculating courage. Yet his daughter, Anna Commena, who wrote a history of his reign, regarded him as a model of imperial virtues; and his court, that had ceased to distinguish pomp from greatness and elaborate ceremonial from glory, echoed this fiction. It was this mixture of pretension and weakness, of skill and cunning, of nerve and treachery, so typical of the later Eastern Emperors, that made the nations of Western Europe, while they admired Byzantium, yet use the word 'Byzantine' as a term of mingled contempt and dislike.

The Emperor, on his part, had no reason to love his Western neighbours. The Popes had robbed him of the Exarchate of Ravenna: they had set up a Headship of the Church in Rome deaf to the claims of Constantinople. When in the eighth century the Emperor Leo, the Isaurian,[1] earned the nickname of 'Iconoclast', or 'Image-breaker', by a campaign of destruction amongst devotional pictures and images that he denounced as idolatrous, Rome definitely refused to accept this ruling on behalf of Western Christendom.

This was the beginning of the actual schism between the Eastern and Western Churches that had been always alien in their outlook. In the ninth century the breach widened, for Pope Nicholas I supported a Patriarch, or Bishop of the Eastern Church, deposed by the Emperor and excommunicated his rival and successor, while subsequent disputes were rendered irreconcilable in the middle of the eleventh

[1] See p. 77.

century when the Patriarch of Constantinople closed the Latin churches and convents in his diocese and publicly declared the views of Rome heretical.

Besides the Pope at Rome the Eastern Empire possessed other foes in Italy. Chief of these were the Normans, who, not content with acquiring Naples, had, under the leadership of Robert Guiscard and his son Bohemund, captured the famous port of Durazzo on the Adriatic and invaded Macedonia. From this province they were only evicted by Alexius Commenus after wearying campaigns of guerrilla warfare to which his military ability was better suited than to pitched battles or shock tactics.

More subtly dangerous than either Pope or Normans was the commercial rivalry of the merchant cities of the Mediterranean, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice. It was Venice who from behind her barrier of islands had watched Attila the Hun lead away his armies in impotent rage.[1] It was Venice again who of the North Italian states successfully resisted the feudal domination of Western Emperors and kept her own form of republican government inviolate of external control. It was the young Venice, the 'Queen of the Adriatic' as her sons and daughters proudly called her, that could alone in her commercial splendour and arrogance compare with the dying glory of Constantinople.

Alexius Commenus in his struggles against Robert Guiscard had been compelled to call twice upon Venice for the assistance of her fleet; but he paid dearly for this alliance in the trading privileges he was forced to grant in Eastern waters. Wherever in the Orient Venetian merchants landed to exchange goods they were quick to establish a political footing; and the world mart on the Adriatic, into which poured the silks and dyes, the sugar and spices of Asia, built up under the rule of its 'Doges', or Dukes, a national as well as a commercial reputation.

In 1095 necessity spurred Alexius Commenus to appeal not merely to Venice for succour but to Pope Urban II and all the leading princes of Western Europe.

'From Jerusalem to the Aegean,' he wrote, 'the Turkish hordes have mastered all: their galleys, sweeping the Black Sea

[1] See p. 45.

and the Mediterranean, threaten the imperial city itself, which, if fall it must, had better fall into the hands of Latins than of Pagans.'

These Turks, or 'Tartars', to whom he referred, were the cause of the Eastern Empire's sudden danger. Descendants of a Mongol race in central Asia, of which the Huns were also an offshoot, they turned their faces westward some centuries later than the ancestors of Attila, fired by the same love of battle and bloodshed and the same contempt for civilization. To them the wonderful Arabian kingdom, moulded by successive Caliphs of Bagdad out of Eastern art, luxury, and mysticism, held no charm save loot. Conquered Greece had endowed Rome with its culture, but the inheritance of Haroun al-Raschid bequeathed to its conquerors only the fighting creed of Islam.

Mahometans in faith, the Turkish armies, more dangerous than ever because more fanatical, swept over Persia, Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor, subjugating Arabs and Christians until they came almost to the straits of the Bosporus. Here it was that they forced Alexius Commenus to realize his imminent danger and to turn to his enemies in Europe for the protection of his tottering Empire.

The Latins, or Christians of the West, to whom he appealed, had reasons enough of their own for answering him with ready promises of men and money. From the early days of the Church it had been the custom of pious folk, or of sinners anxious to expiate some crime, to set out in small companies to visit the Holy Places in Jerusalem where tradition held that Christ had preached, prayed, and suffered, that there they might give praise to God and seek His pardon. These 'pilgrimages', with their mixture of good comradeship, danger, and discomfort, had become very dear to the popular mind, and, if not encouraged by the Mahometan Arabs, had been at least tolerated. 'Hospitals', or sanctuaries, were built for the refreshment of weary or sick travellers, and pilgrims on the payment of a toll could wander practically where they chose.

On the advent of the Turks all was changed: the Holy Places became more and more difficult to visit, Christians were stoned

and beaten, mulcted of their last pennies in extortionate tolls, and left to die of hunger or flung into dungeons for ransom.

Tradition says that a certain French hermit called Peter, who visited Jerusalem during the worst days of Turkish rule, went one night to the Holy Sepulchre weeping at the horrors he had seen, and as he knelt in prayer, it seemed to him that Christ himself stood before him and bade him 'rouse the Faithful to the cleansing of the Holy Places'. With this mission in mind he at once left the Holy Land and sought Pope Urban II, who had already received the letter of Alexius Commenus and now, fired by the hermit's enthusiasm, willingly promised his support.

Whether Urban was persuaded by Peter or no is a matter of doubt, but he at any rate summoned a council to Clermont in 1095, and there in moving words besought the chivalry of Europe to set aside its private feuds and either recover the Holy Places or die before the city where Christ had given his life for the world. It is likely that he spoke from mixed motives. A true inheritor of the theories of Gregory VII, he could not but recognize in the prospect of a religious war, where the armies of Europe would fight under the papal banner and at the papal will, the exaltation of the Roman See. Was there not also the hope of bringing the Greek Church into submission to the Roman as the outcome of an alliance with the Greek Empire? Might not many turbulent feudal princes be persuaded to journey to the East, who by happy chance would return no more to trouble Europe?

Such calculations could Urban's ambitions weave, but with them were entwined unworldly visions that lent him a force and eloquence that no calculations could have supplied. Wherever he spoke the surging crowd would rush forward with the shout *Deus vult*, 'It is the will of God,' and this became the battle-cry of the crusaders.

'The whole world,' says a contemporary, 'desired to go to the tomb of our Lord at Jerusalem . . . . First of all went the meaner people, then the men of middle rank, and lastly very many kings, counts, marquesses, and bishops, and, a thing that never happened before, many women turned their steps in the same direction.'

The order is significant and shows that the appeal of Urban and of Peter the Hermit had touched first the heart of the masses to whom the rich man's temptation to hesitate and think of the morrow were of no account. Corn had been dear in France before the Council of Clermont owing to bad harvests; but the speculators who had bought up the grain to sell at a high price to those who later must eat or die found it left on their hands after the council was over. The men and women of France were selling not buying, regardless of possible famine, that they might find money to fulfil their burning desire to go to the Holy Land and there win the Holy Sepulchre and gain pardon for their sins as Pope and hermit had promised them.

The ordinary crusading route passed through the Catholic kingdom of Hungary to Bulgaria and thence to Constantinople, where the various companies of armed pilgrims had agreed to meet. It was with the entry into Bulgaria, whose 'orthodox'[1] king was secretly hostile to the pilgrims, that trouble began. Food and drink were grudged by the suspicious natives even to those willing to pay their way; whereupon the utterly undisciplined forces could not be prevented from retaliating on this inhospitality by fire and pillage. A species of warfare ensued in which Latin stragglers were cut off and murdered by mountain robbers, while the many 'undesirables', who had joined the crusaders more in hope of loot and adventure than of pardon, brought an evil reputation on their comrades by their greed and the brutality they exhibited towards the peasants.

Reason enough was here to account for the pathetic failure of the advance-guard of crusaders, the poor, the fanatic, the disreputable, drawn together in no settled organization and with no leaders of military repute.

Alexius Commenus, who had demanded an army, not a rabble, dealt characteristically with the problem by shipping these first crusaders in haste and unsupported to Asia Minor. There he left them to fall a prey to the Turks, disease, and their own

[1] See p. 143.

inadequacy, so that few ever saw the coasts of their native lands again.

If the First Crusade began in tragedy it ended in triumph, through the arrival in Constantinople of a second force from the West, this time of disciplined troops under the chief military leaders of Europe. Alexius Commenus had good cause to remember the prowess of his old enemy, Bohemund, son of Robert Guiscard, who rode at the head of his Sicilian Normans, while other names of repute were Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, and Robert, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, with Archbishop Odo of Bayeux, his uncle.

'Some of the crusaders', wrote Anna Commena, 'were guileless men and women, marching in all simplicity to worship at the tomb of Christ; but there were others of a more wicked kind, to wit Bohemund and the like: such men had but one object—to obtain possession of the imperial city.'

These suspicions, perhaps well founded, were natural to the daughter of the untrustworthy Alexius Commenus, who trusted nobody. Hating to entertain at his court so many well-armed and often insolent strangers, yet fearing in his heart to aid their advance lest they should set up a rival kingdom to his own, the Emperor, having cajoled the leaders into promises of homage for any conquests they might make, at length transported them and their followers across the Hellespont.

The Christian campaign began with the capture of Nicea in 1097, followed by a victorious progress through Asia Minor. For nearly a year the crusaders besieged and then were in their turn besieged in Antioch, enduring tortures of hunger, thirst, and disease. When courage flagged and hope seemed nearly dead, it was the supposed discovery, by one of the chaplains, of the lance that had pierced Christ's side as he hung upon the Cross that kept the Christians from surrender. With this famous relic borne in their midst by the papal legate, the crusaders flung the gates of Antioch wide and issued forth in a charge so irresistible in its certainty of victory that the Turks broke and fled. The defeat became a rout, and Antioch remained as a Christian principality under Bohemund, when

the crusaders marched southwards along the coast route towards Jerusalem.

They came in sight of this, the goal of their ambitions, on 7th June, 1099, not garbed as knights and soldiers but barefooted as humble pilgrims, kneeling in an ecstasy of awe upon the Mount of Olives. This mood of prayer passed rapidly into one of fierce determination, and on 15th June Godfrey de Bouillon and his Lorrainers forced a breach in the massive walls, and, hacking their way with sword and spear through the streets, met their fellow crusaders triumphantly entering from another side. The scene that followed, while in keeping with mediaeval savagery, has left a shameful stain upon the Christianity it professed to represent. Turks, Arabs, and Jews, old men and women, children and babies, thousands of a defenceless population, were deliberately butchered as a sacrifice to the Christ who, dying, preached forgiveness. The crusaders rode their horses up to the knees in the blood of that human shambles. 'There might no prayers nor crying of mercy prevail,' says an eyewitness. 'Such a slaughter of pagan folk had never been seen nor heard of. None knew their number, save God alone.'

Their mission accomplished, the majority of crusaders turned their faces homewards, but before they went they elected Godfrey de Bouillon to be the first ruler of the new Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, with Antioch and Edessa in the north as dependent principalities.

Godfrey reigned for almost a year, bearing the title 'Guardian of the Holy Grave', since he refused to be crowned master of a city where Christ had worn a wreath of thorns. His protest is typical of the genuine humility and love of God that mingled so strangely in his veins with pride and cruelty. When he died he left a reputation for courage and justice that wove around his memory romance and legends like the tales of Charlemagne.

His immediate successors were a brother and nephew, and it is in the reign of the latter that we first hear mention of the Military Orders, so famous in the crusading annals of the Middle Ages. These were the 'Hospitallers' or 'Knights of St. John',

inheritors of the rents and property belonging to the old 'Hospital' founded for pilgrims in Jerusalem, and the 'Templars', so called from their residence near the sight of Solomon's Temple.

Both Orders were bound like the monks by the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity; but the work demanded of them, instead of labour in the fields, was perpetual war against the infidel. 'When the Templars are summoned to arms,' said a thirteenth-century writer, 'they inquire not of the number but of the position of their foe. They are lions in war, lambs in the house: to the enemies of Christ fierce and implacable, but to Christians kind and gracious.'

Yet a third Order, that of the Teutonic Knights, was founded in the twelfth century, arising like that of the Knights of St. John out of a hospital, but one that had been built by German merchants for crusaders of their own race. At the end of the thirteenth century the Order removed to the southern Baltic, and on these cold inhospitable shores embarked on a crusade against the heathen Lithuanians. It is of interest to students of modern history to note that in the sixteenth century the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights became converted to the doctrines of Luther, suppressed his Order, and absorbed the estates into an hereditary fief, the Duchy of Brandenburg. On the 'Mark'[1] and Duchy of Brandenburg, both founded with entirely military objects, was the future kingdom of Prussia built.

The Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187) survived for more than three-quarters of a century. That it had been established with such comparative ease was due not only to the fighting quality of the crusaders, but also to the feuds that divided Turkish rulers of the House of Seljuk. The Turks far outnumbered the Christians, and whenever the Caliphs of Bagdad and Cairo should sink their rivalries, or one Moslem ruler in the East gain supremacy over all others, the days of the small Latin kingdom in Palestine would be numbered. In the meantime the Latins maintained their position with varying fortune, now with the aid of fresh

[1] See p. 131.

recruits from Europe and Genoese and Venetian sailors, capturing coast towns, now losing land-outposts there were insufficient garrisons to protect.

It was the loss of Edessa that roused Europe to its Second Crusade, this time through the eloquence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who persuaded not only Louis VII of France and his wife, Queen Eleanor, but also the at first reluctant Emperor Conrad III, to bind the Cross on their arms and go to the succour of Christendom. 'The Christian who slays the unbeliever in the Holy War is sure of his reward, more sure if he is slain.'

The pictures of the glories of martyrdom and of earthly conquests painted by the famous monk were so vivid that on one occasion he was forced to tear up his own robes to provide sufficient crosses for the eager multitude, but the triumph to which he called so great a part of the populations of France and Germany proved the beckoning hand of death and failure.

Both the King and Emperor reached Palestine—Louis VII even visited Jerusalem—but when they sailed homewards they had accomplished nothing of any lasting value. Edessa remained under Mahometan rule and the Christians had been forced to abandon the siege of Damascus that they had intended as a prelude to a victorious campaign. What was worse was that Louis and Conrad had left the chivalry of their armies in a track of whitening bones where they had retreated, victims not merely of Turkish prowess and numbers but of Christian feuds, Greek treachery, the failure of food supplies, and disease.

The Byzantine Empire owed to the first crusaders large tracts of territory recovered from the Turks in Asia Minor; but, angered by broken promises of homage on the part of Latin rulers, the Greeks repaid this debt in the Second Crusade by acting as spies and secret allies of the Mahometans. On occasions they were even to be found fighting openly side by side with the Turks, yet more merciless than these pagans in their brutal refusal to give food and drink to the stragglers of the Latin armies whom they had so basely betrayed.

The widows and orphans of France and Germany, when their rulers returned reft both of glory and men-at-arms, reviled

St. Bernard as a false prophet; but though he responded sternly that the guilt lay not with God but in the worldliness of those who had taken the Cross, he was sorely troubled at the shattering of his own hopes.

'The Sons of God', he wrote wearily, 'have been overthrown in the desert, slain with the sword, or destroyed by famine. We promised good things and behold disorder. The judgements of the Lord are righteous, but this one is an abyss so deep that I must call him blessed who is not scandalized therein.'

For some years after the Second Crusade Western Europe turned a deaf ear to entreaties for help from Palestine, and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem continued to decline steadily not only in territory but in its way of life. The ennervating climate, the temptations to an unhealthy luxury that forgot Christian ideals, the almost unavoidable intermarriage of the races of East and West: all these sapped the vitality and efficiency of the crusading settlers; while the establishment of a feudal government at Jerusalem resulted in the usual quarrels amongst tenants-in-chief and their sub-tenants. In these feuds the Hospitallers and Templars joined with an avaricious rivalry unworthy of their creed of self-denial.

By 1183 Guy de Lusignan, who had succeeded in seizing the crown of Jerusalem by craft on the failure of the royal line, could only count on the lukewarm support of the majority of Latin barons. Thus handicapped he found himself suddenly confronted by a union of the Turks of Egypt and Syria under Saladin, Caliph of Cairo, a leader so capable and popular that the downfall of divided enemies was inevitable.

At Hattin, near the Lake of Tiberias, on a rocky, waterless spot, the Christians and Mahometans met for a decisive battle in the summer of 1187. The Latins, hemmed in by superior numbers, and tortured by the heat and thirst, fought desperately beneath the relic of the True Cross that they had borne with them as an incitement to their courage; but the odds were too great, and King Guy himself was forced to surrender when the defeat of his army had turned into a rout.

In the autumn of the same year Jerusalem, after less than a

month's siege, opened her gates to the victor. Very different was the entry of Saladin to that of the first crusaders; for instead of a general massacre the Christian population was put to ransom, the Sultan and his brother as an 'acceptable alms to Allah' freeing hundreds of the poorer classes for whom enough money could not be provided.

Europe received the news that the Holy Sepulchre had returned to the custody of the infidel with a shame and indignation that was expressed in the Third Crusade. This time, however, no straggling bands of enthusiasts were encouraged; and though the expedition was approved by the Pope, neither he nor any famous churchman, such as Peter the Hermit or St. Bernard of Clairvaux, were responsible for the majority of volunteers.

The Third Crusade was in character a military campaign of three great nations: of the Germans under the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, or the 'Red Beard'; of the French under Philip II; and of the English under Richard the 'Lion-Heart'. Other princes famous enough in their lands for wealth and prowess sailed also; and had there been union in that great host Saladin might well have trembled for his Empire. He was saved by the utter lack of cohesion and petty jealousies of his enemies as well as by his statecraft and military skill.

While English and French rulers still haggled over the terms of an alliance that would allow them to leave their lands with an easy mind, Frederick Barbarossa, the last to take the Cross, set out from Germany, rapidly crossed Hungary and Bulgaria, reduced the Greek Emperor to hostile inactivity by threats and military display, and began a victorious campaign through Asia Minor. Here fate intervened to help the Mahometans, for while fording a river in Cilicia the Emperor was swept from his horse by the current and drowned. So passed away Frederick the 'Red Beard', and with him what his strong personality had made an army. Some of the Teutons returned home, while those who remained degenerated into a rabble, easy victims for their enemies' spears and arrows.

In the meantime Richard of England (1189–99) and Philip of France had clasped the hand of friendship, and, having levied the

Saladin Tithe, a tax of one-tenth of the possessions of all their subjects, in order to pay their expenses, set sail eastwards from Marseilles. Both were young and eager for military glory; but the French king could plot and wait to achieve the ultimate success he desired while in Richard the statesman was wholly sunk in the soldier of fortune.

To mediaeval chroniclers there was something dazzling in the Lion-Heart's physical strength, and in the sheer daring with which he would force success out of apparently inevitable failure, or realize some dangerous enterprise.

'Though fortune wreaks her spleen on whomsoever she pleases, yet was he not drowned for all her adverse waves.'

'The Lord of Ages gave him such generosity of soul and endued him with such virtues that he seemed rather to belong to earlier times than these.'

'To record his deeds would cramp the writer's finger joints and stun the hearer's mind.'

Such are a few of the many flattering descriptions the obvious sincerity of which paints the English king as he seemed to the men who fought beside him.

A clever strategist, a born leader in battle, fearless himself, and with a restless energy that inspired him when sick to be carried on cushions in order to direct the fire of his stone-slingers, Richard turned his golden qualities of generalship to dust by his utter lack of diplomacy and tact. Of gifts such as these, that are one-half of kingship, he was not so much ignorant as heedless. He 'willed' to do things like his great ancestor, the Conqueror, but his sole weapon was his right hand, not the subtlety of his brain.

'The King of England had gallows erected outside his camp to hang thieves and robbers on . . . deeming it no matter of what country the criminals were, he considered every man as his own and left no wrong unavenged.'

This typical high-handed action, no doubt splendid in theory as a method of discouraging the crimes that had helped to ruin previous campaigns, was, when put into practice, sufficient alone to account for the hatred Richard inspired amongst rulers whose subjects he thus chose to judge and execute at will. The King

of France, we are told, 'winked at the wrongs his men inflicted and received,' but he gained friends, while Richard's progress was a series of embittered feuds, accepted light-heartedly without any thought of his own future interests or of those of the crusade.

Open rupture with Philip II of France was brought about almost before they had left the French coasts through Richard's repudiation of his ally's sister, to whom he had been bethrothed, since the English king was now determined on a match with Berengaria, the daughter of the King of Navarre.

In South Italy he acquired his next enemies in both claimants then disputing the crown of Sicily, but before he sailed away he had battered one of the rivals, the Norman, Tancred, into an outwardly submissive ally after a battle in the streets of Messina. The other rival, Henry, son of Frederick Barbarossa, and afterwards the Emperor Henry VI, remained his enemy, storing up a grudge against him in the hopes of a suitable opportunity for displaying it.

From Cyprus Richard, pursuing military glory, drove its Greek ruler because he had dared to imprison some shipwrecked Englishmen; and thus, adding an island to his dominions and the Eastern Emperor to his list of foes, arrived at last in Palestine, in the summer of 1191, just in time to join Philip II in the siege of Acre.

'The two kings and peoples did less together than they would have done separately, and each set but light store by the other.' So the tale runs in the contemporary chronicle; and when Acre at last surrendered the feuds between the English and French had grown so irreconcilable that Philip II, who had fallen sick, sulkily declared that he had fulfilled his crusading vow and departed homewards. Not long afterwards went Leopold, Archduke of Austria, nursing cold rage against Richard in his heart because of an insult to his banner, that, planted on an earthwork beside the arms of England, had been contemptuously flung into the ditch below.

The Lion-Heart was now master of the enterprise in Palestine, a terror to the Turks, who would use his name to frighten

their unruly children into submission; but though he remained fourteen months, the jealousies and rivalries of his camp, with which he was not the man to contend, kept him dallying on the coast route to Jerusalem, unable to proceed by open warfare or to get the better of the wily Saladin in diplomacy.

News came that Philip II and the Emperor Henry VI were plotting with his brother John for his ruin at home, and Richard, weary at heart and sick in health, agreed to a three years and eight months' truce that left the Christians in the possession of the seaports of Jaffa and Tyre, with the coastal territory between them, and gave pilgrims leave to visit Jerusalem untaxed. He himself refused with tears in his eyes even to gaze from a distant height on the city he could not conquer; but, vowing he would return, he set sail for the West in the autumn of 1192, and with his departure the Third Crusade ended.

There were to be many other crusades, but none that expressed in the same way as these first three expeditions the united aspirations of Western Europe for the recovery of the land of the Holy Sepulchre. National jealousies had ruined the chances of the Third Crusade, and with every year the spirit of nationality was to grow in strength and make common action less possible for Europe.

There is another reason also for the changing character of the Crusades, namely, the loss of the religious enthusiasm in which they had their origin. Men and women had believed that the cross on their arms could turn sinners into saints, break down battlements, and destroy infidels, as if by miracle. When they found that human passions flourished as easily in Palestine as at home and that the way of salvation was, as ever, the path of hard labour and constant effort, they were disillusioned, and eager multitudes no longer clamoured to go to the East. The Crusades did not stop suddenly, but degenerated with a few exceptions into mere political enterprises, patronized now by one nation, now by another: the armies recruited by mere love of adventure, lust of battle, or the desire for plunder.

If Western Christendom had gained no other blessing by them, the early Crusades at least freed the nations at a critical

moment from a large proportion of the unruly baronage that had been a danger to commerce and good government. England paid heavily in gold for the Third Crusade; but the money supplied by merchants and towns was well spent in securing from the Lion-Heart privileges and charters that laid the foundations of municipal liberty.

In France the results of the Second Crusade had been for the moment devastating. Whole villages marched away, cities and castles stood empty, and in some provinces it was said 'scarce one man remained to seven women'. In the orgy of selling that marked this exodus lands and possessions rapidly changed hands, the smaller fiefs tending to be absorbed by the larger fiefs and many of these in their turn by the crown. Aided also by other causes, the King of France with his increased demesnes and revenues came to assume a predominant position in the national life.

Perhaps the chief effect of the Crusades on Europe generally was the stimulus of new influences. Men and women, if they live in a rut and feed their brains continually on the same ideas, grow prejudiced. It is good for them to travel and come in contact with opposite views of life and different manners and customs, however much it may annoy them at the time. The Crusades provided this kind of stimulus not only to the commerce of Mediterranean ports but in the world of thought, literature, and art. The necessity of transport for large armies improved shipbuilding; the cunning of Turkish foes the ingenuity of Christian armourers and engineers; the influence of Byzantine architecture and mosaics the splendour of Venice in stone and colour.

Western Europe continued to hate the East; but she could not live without her silks, spices, and perfumes, nor forget to dream of the fabulous wonders of Cathay. Thus the age of the Crusades will be seen at last to merge its failures in the successes of an age of discovery, that were to lay bare a new West and another road to the Orient.

XIII

THE MAKING OF FRANCE

Amongst those who took the Cross during the Second Crusade had been Louis VII of France and his wife, Queen Eleanor. They were an ill-matched pair, the King of mediocre ability, weak, peace-loving, and pious; Eleanor, like all the House of Aquitaine, to which she belonged, imperious, fierce-willed, and without scruples where she loved or hated. Restless excitement had prompted her journey to Palestine; and Louis was impelled by the scandal to which her conduct there gave rise, and also by his annoyance that they had no son, to divorce her soon after they returned home.

The foolishness of this step from a political point of view can be gauged by studying a map of France in the middle of the twelfth century, and remembering that, though king of the whole country in name, Louis as feudal overlord could depend on little but the revenues and forces to be raised from his own estates. These lay in a small block round Paris, while away to the north, east, and south were the provinces of tenants-in-chief three or four times as extensive in area as those of the royal House of Capet. By marrying Eleanor, Countess of Poitou and Duchess of Aquitaine, Louis had become direct ruler of the middle and south-west of France as well as of his own crown demesnes, but when he divorced his wife he at once forfeited her possessions.

Worse from his point of view was to follow; for Eleanor made immediate use of her freedom to marry Henry, Count of Anjou, a man fourteen years her junior, but the most important tenant-in-chief of the King of France and therefore, if he chose, not unlikely to prove that king's most dangerous enemy. This Henry, besides being Count of Anjou, Maine,

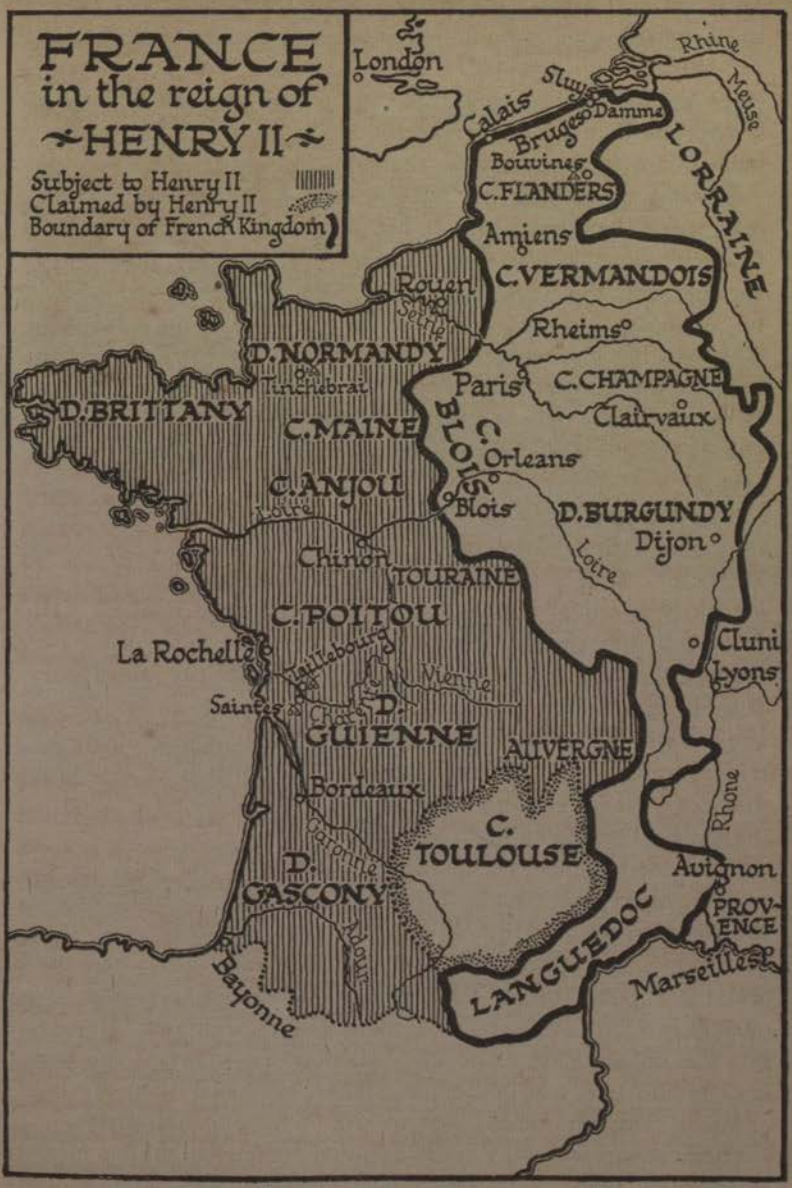
and Touraine, was also Duke of Normandy and King of England, for he was a grandson of Henry I, and had in 1154 succeeded the feeble Stephen, of the anarchy of whose reign we gave a slight description in another chapter.[1]

Before dealing with the results of Henry's marriage with the heiress of Aquitaine it is well to note his work as King of England, for this was destined to be the greatest and most lasting of all the many tasks he undertook. In character Henry was the exact opposite of Stephen. Where the other had wavered he pressed forward, utterly determined to be master of his own land. One by one he besieged the rebel barons, and levelled with the ground the castles they had built in order to torture and oppress their neighbours. He also took from them the crown lands which Stephen had recklessly given away in the effort to buy popularity and support. When he found that many of these nobles had usurped the chief offices of state he replaced them as quickly as he could by men of humble rank and of his own choosing. In this way he appointed a Londoner, Thomas Becket, whom he had first created Chancellor, to be Archbishop of Canterbury; but the impetuous choice proved one of his few mistakes.

Henry was so self-confident himself that he was apt to underrate the abilities of those with whom life brought him in contact and to believe that every other will must necessarily bow to his own. It is certain that he found it difficult to pause and listen to reason, for his restless energy was ever spurring him on to fresh ambitions, and he could not bear to waste time, as he thought, in listening to criticisms on what he had already decided. Chroniclers describe how he would fidget impatiently or draw pictures during Mass, commending the priest who read fastest, while he would devote odd moments of his day to patching his old clothes for want of something more interesting to do.

Henry II was so able that haste in his case did not mean that his work was slipshod. He had plenty of foresight, and did not content himself with destroying those of his subjects who were unruly. He knew that he must win the support of

[1] See p. 122.


FRANCE
in the reign of
HENRY II
Subject to Henry II
Claimed by Henry II
Boundary of French Kingdom
London
Calais
Sluys
Damme
Bruges
Bouvines
C. FLANDERS
Rhine
Meuse
LORRAINE
Amiens
C. VERMANDOIS
Rouen
Seine
Rheims
D. NORMANDY
Paris
C. CHAMPAGNE
Clairvaux
D. BRITTANY
C. MAINE
C. BLOIS
Orleans
C. ANJOU
Loire
Blois
D. BURGUNDY
Dijon
Chinon
TOURAINE
Loire
C. POITOU
La Rochelle
Cluni
Lyons
Saintes
Vienne
D. GUIENNE
AUVERGNE
Bordeaux
Rhone
C. TOULOUSE
Avignon
D. GASCONY
PROV-
ENCE
Adour
Bayonne
LANGUEDOC
Marseilles

the English people if he hoped to build up his estates in France, and this, though destined to bear no lasting fruit, was ever his chief ambition. Henry II was one of the greatest of English kings, but he had been brought up in France and remained more of an Angevin than an Englishman at heart.

Instead of driving his barons into sulky isolation Henry summoned them frequently to his *Magnum Concilium*, or 'Great Council', and asked their advice. When they objected to serving with their followers in France as often as he wished, he arranged a compromise that was greatly to his advantage. This was the institution of 'Scutage', or 'Shield-money', a tax paid by the barons in order to escape military service abroad. With the funds that 'scutage' supplied Henry could hire mercenary troops, while the feudal barons lost a military training-ground.

Besides consulting his 'Great Council', destined to develop into our national parliament, Henry strengthened the *Curia Regis*, or 'King's Court', that his grandfather, Henry I, had established to deal with questions of justice and finance. The barons in the time of Stephen had tried to make their own feudal courts entirely independent of royal authority; but Henry, besides establishing a central Court of Justice to which any subject who thought himself wronged might appeal for a new trial, greatly improved and extended the system of 'Itinerant Justices' whose circuits through the country to hold 'Pleas of the Crown' had been instituted by Henry I.

This interference he found was resented not only by the feudal courts but also by the Sheriffs of the County Courts, the Norman form of the old 'shire-moots', a popular institution of Anglo-Saxon times. Of late years the latter courts had more and more fallen under the domination of neighbouring land-owners, and in order to free them Henry held an 'Inquest' into the doings of the Sheriffs, and deposed many of the great nobles who had usurped these offices, replacing them by men of lesser rank who would look to him for favour and advice.

Other sovereigns in Europe adopted somewhat similar means of exalting royal authority; but England was fortunate in

possessing such popular institutions as the 'moots' or 'meetings' of the shire and 'hundred', through which Henry could establish his justice, instead of merely through crown officials who would have no personal interest in local conditions.

By the Assize of Clarendon it was decreed that twelve men from each hundred and four from each township should decide in criminal cases who amongst the accused were sufficiently implicated to be justly sentenced by the royal judges. Local representatives also were employed on other occasions during Henry's reign in assisting his judges in assessing taxes and in deciding how many weapons and of what sort the ordinary freeman might fittingly carry to the safety of his neighbours and of himself. In civil cases, as when the ownership of land or personal property was in dispute, twelve 'lawful men' of the neighbourhood, or in certain cases twelve Knights of the Shire, were to be elected to help the Sheriff arrive at a just decision. In this system of 'recognition', as it was called, lay the germ of our modern jury.

It is probable that the knights and representatives of the hundreds and townships grumbled continually at the trouble and expense to which the King's legislation put them; for neither they nor Henry II himself would realize that they were receiving a splendid education in the A B C of self-government that must be the foundation of any true democracy. Yet a few generations later, when Henry's weak grandson and namesake Henry III misruled England, the Knights of the Shire were already accepted as men of public experience, and their representatives summoned to a parliament to defend the liberties of England.

Henry II used popular institutions and crown officials as levers against the independence of his baronage, but the chief struggle of his reign in England was not with the barons so much as with the Church. Thomas Becket as Chancellor had been Henry's right hand in attacking feudal privileges: he had warned his master that as a leading Churchman his love might turn to hate, his help to opposition. The King refused to believe him, thrust the burden of the archbishopric of Canterbury on

his unwilling shoulders, and then found to his surprise and rage that he had secured the election of a very Hildebrand, who held so high a conception of the dignity of the Church that it clashed with royal demands at every turn.

One of the chief subjects of dispute was the claim of the Church to reserve for her jurisdiction all cases that affected 'clerks', that is, not only priests, but men employed in the service of the Church, such as acolytes or choristers. The King insisted that clerks convicted in ecclesiastical courts of serious crimes should be handed over to the royal courts for secular punishment. His argument was that if a clerk had committed a murder the ecclesiastical judge was not allowed by Canon law to deliver a death-sentence, and so could do no more than 'unfrock' the guilty man and fine or imprison him. Thus a clerk could live to commit two murders where a layman would by command of the royal judges be hung at the first offence.

Becket, on his side, would not swerve from his opinion that it was sacrilege for royal officials to lay hands on a priest or clerk whether 'criminous' or not; and when Henry embodied his suggestions of royal supremacy in a decree called the Constitutions of Clarendon, the Archbishop publicly refused to sign his agreement to them. Threats and insults were heaped upon him by angry courtiers, and one of his attendants, terrified by the scene, exclaimed, 'Oh, my master, this is a fearful day!' 'The Day of Judgement will be yet more fearful,' answered the undaunted Becket, and in the face of his fearlessness no one at the moment dared to lay hands on him.

Shortly afterwards Becket fled abroad, hoping to win the support of Rome, but the Pope to whom he appealed did not wish to quarrel with the King of England, and used his influence to patch up an agreement that was far too vague to have any binding strength. Thomas Becket returned to Canterbury, but exile had not modified his opinions, and he had hardly landed before he once more appeared in open opposition to Henry's wishes, excommunicating those bishops who had dared to act during his absence without his leave.

The rest of the story is well known—the ungovernable rage of the Angevin king at an obstinacy as great as his own, his rash cry, 'Is my house so full of fools and dastards that none will avenge me on this upstart clerk?' and then his remorse on learning of the four knights who had taken him at his word and murdered the Archbishop as he knelt, still undaunted, on the altar steps of Canterbury Cathedral.

So great was the horror and indignation of Europe, even of those who were devoted to Henry's cause, that the King was driven to strip and scourge himself before the tomb of Thomas the Martyr, as a public act of penance, and all question of the supremacy of the state over the Church was for the time dropped.

One of the many pilgrims who in the next few years visited the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury in the hope of a miracle was Louis VII of France, and the miracle that he so earnestly desired was the recovery of his son and heir, Philip Augustus, from a fever that threatened his life. With many misgivings the old king crossed the Channel to the land of a ruler with whom he had been at almost constant war since Eleanor of Aquitaine's remarriage; but his faith in the vision of the Martyr that had prompted his journey was rewarded. Henry received him with 'great rejoicing and honour' after the manner of a loyal vassal, and when the French king returned home he found his son convalescent.

The sequel to this journey, however, was the sudden paralysis and lingering death of Louis himself, and the coronation of the boy prince in whom France was to find so great a ruler. When the bells of Paris had rung out the joyous tidings of his birth one hot August evening fourteen years before, a young British student had put his head out of his lodging window and demanded the news. 'A boy,' answered the citizens, 'has been given to us this night who by God's grace shall be the hammer of your king, and who beyond a doubt shall diminish the power and lands of him and his subjects.' One-half of the reign of Philip Augustus, *le Dieu-donné*, or 'God-given', was the fulfilment of this prophecy.

At first sight it would seem as though Henry II of England entered the lists against his overlord the Champion of France with overwhelming odds in his favour. Ruler of a territory stretching from Scotland, his dependency, to the Pyrenees, he added to his lands and wealth the brain of a statesman and the experience of long years of war and intrigue. What could a mere boy, fenced round even in his capital of Paris by turbulent barons, hope to achieve against such strength?

Yet the weapons of destruction lay ready to his hand, in the very household of the Angevin ruler himself. Legend records that the blood of some Demon ancestress ran in the veins of the Dukes of Aquitaine, endowing them with a ferocity and falseness strange even to mediaeval minds; and the sons whom Eleanor bore to her second husband were true to this bad strain if to nothing else. 'Dost thou not know', wrote one of them to his father who had reproached him for plotting against his authority, 'that it is our proper nature that none of us should love the other, but that ever brother should strive with brother and son against father? I would not that thou shouldst deprive us of our hereditary right and seek to rob us of our nature.'

Louis VII, in order to weaken Henry II, had encouraged this spirit of treachery, and even provided a refuge for Becket during his exile: his policy was continued by Philip Augustus, who kept open house at Paris for the rebellious family of his tenant-in-chief whenever misfortune drove them to fly before their father's wrath or ambition brought them to hatch some new conspiracy.

Could Henry have once established the same firm grip he had obtained in England over his French possessions, he might have triumphed in the struggle with both sons and overlord; but in Poitou and Aquitaine he was merely regarded as Eleanor's consort, and the people looked to his heirs as rulers, especially to Richard his mother's favourite. Yet never had they suffered a reign of greater licence and oppression than under the reckless and selfish Lion-Heart.

After much secret plotting and open rebellion, Henry succeeded in imprisoning Eleanor, who had encouraged her sons to defy

their father, but with Richard supported by Philip Augustus and the strength of southern France he was forced to come to terms towards the end of his reign. Though only fifty-six, he was already failing in health, and the news that his own province of Maine was fast falling to his enemies had broken his courage. Cursing the son who had betrayed him, he sullenly renewed the oath of homage he owed to Philip, and promised to Richard the wealth and independence he had demanded. The compact signed he rode away, heavy with fever, to his castle of Chinon, and there, indifferent to life, sank into a state of stupor. News was brought him that his youngest son John, for whom he had carved out a principality in Ireland, had been a secret member of the League that had just brought him to his knees. 'Is it true,' he asked, roused for the minute, 'that John, my heart . . . has deserted me?' Reading the answer in the downcast faces of his attendants, he turned his face to the wall. 'Now let things go as they will . . . I care no more for myself or the world.' Thus the old king died.

In 1189 Richard the False succeeded his father, and by his prowess in Palestine became Richard 'Cœur-de-Lion'. How he quarrelled with Philip II we have seen in the last chapter, and that Philip, after the siege of Acre, returned home in disgust at the other's overbearing personality.

Philip Augustus does not cut the same heroic figure on the battle-field as his rival: indeed there was no match in Europe for the 'Devil of Aquitaine', who knew not the word fear, and the glamour of whose feats of arms has outlasted seven centuries. It is in kingship that Philip stands pre-eminent in his own age, ready to do battle at the right moment, but still more ready to serve France by patient statecraft. While Richard remained in Palestine, Philip plotted with the ever-treacherous John for their mutual advantage at the absent king's expense; but their enmity remained secret until the joyful news arrived that the royal crusader had been captured in disguise on his way home by the very Leopold of Austria whose banner he had once contemptuously cast into a ditch.

Now the Duke of Austria's overlord was the Emperor

Henry VI, whose claims to Sicily Richard had often derided; and the Lion-Heart, passing from the dungeon of the vassal to that of the overlord, did not escape until his subjects had paid a huge ransom and he himself had promised to hold England as a fief of the Empire. 'Beware, the Devil is loose', wrote Philip to John, when he heard that their united efforts to bribe Henry VI into keeping his prisoner permanently had failed.

The next few years saw a prolonged struggle between the French armies that had invaded Normandy and the forces of Richard, who, burning for revenge, proved as terrible a rival to Philip in the north of France as he had been in the East; and the duel continued until a poisoned arrow pierced the Lion-Heart's shoulder, causing his death. 'God visited the land of France,' wrote a chronicler, 'for King Richard was no more.'

From this moment Philip Augustus began to realize his most cherished ambitions, slowly at first, but, thanks to the 'worst of the English kings', with ever-increasing rapidity. John, who had succeeded Richard, was neither statesman nor soldier. To meaningless outbursts of Angevin rage he added the treachery and cruelty of the House of Aquitaine and a sluggish disregard of dignity and ordinary decency peculiarly his own. Soon all his subjects were banded together against him in fear, hatred, and scorn: the Church, on whose privileges he trampled; the barons, whose wives and daughters were unsafe at his court, and whose lands he ravaged and confiscated; the people, whom his mercenaries tortured and oppressed. How he quarrelled with the Chapter of Canterbury over its choice of an archbishop, defied Pope Innocent III, and then, brought to his knees by an interdict, did homage to the Holy See for his possessions; these things, and the signing of Magna Charta, the English Charter of Popular Liberties, at Runymede, are tales well known in English history.

What is important to emphasize here in a European history is the contrast of the unpopularity that John had gained for himself amongst all classes of his own subjects at the very moment that Philip Augustus seemed, in French eyes, to be indeed their 'God-given' king.

While John feasted at Rouen messengers brought word that Philip was conquering Normandy. 'Let him alone! Some day I will win back all he has taken.' So answered the sluggard, but when he at last raised his standard it was already too late. The English barons would have followed 'Cœur-de-Lion' on the road to Paris: they were reluctant to take sword out of scabbard for John: the very Angevins and Normans were beginning to realize that they had more in common with their French conquerors than with any king across the Channel. Aquitaine, it is true, looked sourly on Philip's progress, but the reason was not that she loved England, but that she feared the domination of Paris, and made it a systematic part of her policy for years to support the ruler who lived farthest away, and would therefore be likely to interfere the least in her internal affairs.

In 1214 John made his most formidable effort, dispatching an army to Flanders to unite with that of the powerful Flemish Count Ferrand, one of Philip's tenants-in-chief, and with the Emperor Otto IV, in a combined attack on the northern French frontier. At Bouvines the armies met, Philip Augustus, in command of his forces, riding with a joyful face 'no less than if he had been bidden to a wedding'.

The battle, when it opened, found him wherever the fight was hottest, wielding his sword, encouraging, rallying, until by nightfall he remained victor of the field, with the Count of Flanders and many another of his chief enemies, including the English commander, prisoners at his mercy.

Philip carried Count Ferrand behind him in chains on his triumphal march to Paris, while all the churches along the way rang their bells, and the crowds poured forth to cheer their king and sing *Te Deums*.

'The Battle of Bouvines was perhaps the most important engagement ever fought on French soil.' So wrote a modern historian before the war of 1914.

In the days of Louis VII the Kings of France had stood dwarfed amid Dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine and Counts of Flanders and Anjou. Now the son of Louis had defeated

an emperor, thrown one rebellious tenant-in-chief into a dungeon, and from another, the Angevin John, gained as the reward of his victory all the long-coveted provinces north of the Loire. Even the crown treasury, once so poor, was replete for the time with the revenues of the confiscated Norman and Angevin estates of English barons, who had been forbidden by their sovereign to do homage any more to a French overlord.

Philip Augustus had shown himself Philip 'the Conqueror'; but he was something far greater—a king who, like Henry II of England, could build as well as destroy. During his reign the menace of the old feudal baronage was swept away, and the government received its permanent stamp as a servant of the monarchy.

In his dealing with the French Church Philip followed the traditions of Pepin the Short and Charlemagne, yet gratifying as were his numerous gifts to monasteries and convents, they were dovetailed into a scheme of combining the liberal patron with the firm master. That good relations between the king and clergy resulted was largely due to Philip's policy of replacing bishops belonging to powerful families by men of humble origin accustomed to subservience. Also he would usually support the lesser clergy in their frequent quarrels with their ecclesiastical superiors, thus weakening the leaders while he won the affection of the rank and file.

Like John he came into collision with the iron will of Pope Innocent III, but on a purely moral question, his refusal to live with the Danish princess Ingeborg, to whom he had taken a violent and unaccountable dislike on his wedding-day. The bride was a girl of eighteen; she could speak no French, her husband's bishops were afraid to uphold her cause whatever their secret opinions, but in appealing to the Pope for help she gained an unyielding champion.

In other chapters we shall see Innocent III as a politician and a persecutor of heretics: here he stands as the moral leader of Europe; and no estimate of his character and work would be fair that neglected this aspect. It was to Innocent's political advantage to please the French king, whose help he needed to

chastise the English John and to support a crusade against an outburst of heresy in Languedoc. Moreover, he had no armies to compel a king who accused his wife of witchcraft to recognize her as queen. Yet Innocent believed that Philip was in the wrong; and when the French king persuaded his bishops to divorce him and then promptly married again, papal letters proceeded to denounce the divorce as a farce and the new marriage as illegal.

'Recall your lawful wife,' wrote Innocent, 'and then we will hear all that you can righteously urge. If you do not do this no power shall move us to right or left until justice be done.' This letter was followed by threats of excommunication, and after some months by an interdict that reduced Philip to a promise of submission in return for a full inquiry into his case. The promise so grudgingly given remained but a promise, and it was not until 1213, nearly twenty years since he had so cruelly repudiated Ingeborg, that, driven by continual papal pressure and the critical state of his fortunes, Philip openly acknowledged the Danish princess as his wife and queen.

We have seen something of Philip's dealings with his greater tenants-in-chief; but such achievements as the conquest of Normandy and Anjou and the victory of Bouvines were but the fruits of years of diplomacy, during which the royal power had permeated the land, like ether the atmosphere, almost unnoticed. In lending a sympathetic ear to the complaints of Richard and his brothers against their father, Philip was merely carrying out the policy we have noticed in his treatment of the Church.

'He never began a new campaign without forming alliances that might support him at each step', says Philip's modern biographer; and these allies were often the sub-tenants of large feudal estates to whom in the days of peace he had given his support against the claims of their feudal overlords. Sometimes he had merely used his influence as a mediator, at others he had granted privileges to the tenants, or else he had called the case in dispute before his own royal court for judgement. By one means or another, at any rate, he had made the lesser tenants feel that he was their friend, so that when he went out to

battle they would flock eagerly to his banner, sometimes in defiance of their overlord.

One danger to the crown lay, not in the actual feudal baronage, but in the *prévôts*, officials appointed by the king with power to exact taxes, adminster the laws, and judge offenders in his name in the provinces. When the monarchy was weak these *prévôts*, from lack of control, developed into petty tyrants, and it was fortunate for Philip that their encroachments were resented by both nobles and clergy, so that a system of reform that reduced them again to a subordinate position was everywhere welcomed.

Gradually a link was established between local administration and the king's council, namely, officials called in the north of France *baillis*, in the south *sénéchals*, whose duty was to keep a watch over the *prévôt* and to depose or report him if necessary. The *prévôt* was still to collect the royal revenues as of old, but the *bailli* would take care that he did not cheat the king, and would forward the money that he received to the central government: he would also hold assizes and from time to time visit Paris, where he would give an account of local conditions and how he had dealt with them.

In these reforms, as in those of Henry II of England, a process that was gradually changing the face of Europe can be seen at work, first the crumbling of feudal machinery too clumsy to keep pace with the needs and demands of dawning civilization, and next its replacement by an official class, educated in the intricacies of finance, justice, and administration, and dependent not on the baronage but on the monarchy for its inspiration and success.

The chief nobles of France in early mediaeval times had regarded such titles as 'Mayor of the Palace', 'Seneschal', 'Chamberlain', 'Butler', &c., as bestowing both hereditary glory and also political power. With the passing of years some of the titles vanished, while under Philip Augustus and his grandson Louis IX those that remained passed to 'new' men of humbler rank, who bore them merely while they retained the office, or else, shorn of any political power, continued as

honours of the court and ballroom. In effect the royal household, once a kind of general servant 'doing a bit of everything inadequately' as in the days of Charlemagne, had now developed into two distinct bodies, each with their separate sphere of work: the great nobles surrounding their sovereign with the dignity and ceremonial in which the Middle Ages rejoiced, the trained officials advising him and carrying out his will.

In his attitude to the large towns, except on his own crown lands where like other landowners he hesitated to encourage independence, Philip II showed himself sympathetic to the attempts of citizens to throw off the yoke of neighbouring barons, bishops, and abbots. Many of the towns had formed 'communes', that is, corporations something like a modern trade union, but these, though destined to play a large part in French history, were as yet only in their infancy. They had their origin sometimes in a revolutionary outburst against oppression, but often in a real effort on the part of leading townsmen to organize the civil life on profitable lines by means of 'guilds', or associations of merchants and traders with special privileges and laws. Some of the privileges at which these city corporations aimed were the right to collect their own taxes, to hold their own law-courts for deciding purely local disputes, and to protect their trade against fraud, tyranny, and competition from outside. It all sounds natural enough to modern ears, but it awoke profound indignation in a French writer of the twelfth century.

'The word "commune", he says, 'is new and detestable, for this is what it implies; that those who owe taxes shall pay the rent that is due to their lord but once in the year only, and if they commit a crime against him they shall find pardon when they have made amends according to a fixed tariff of justice.'

Except within his own demesnes Phillip II readily granted charters confirming the 'communes' in their coveted rights, and he also founded 'new' towns under royal protection, offering there upon certain conditions a refuge to escaped serfs able to pay the necessary taxes.

In Paris itself his reign marks a new era, when, instead of a town famed according to a chronicler of the day chiefly for its pestiferous smells, there were laid the foundations of one of the most luxurious cities of Europe. The cleansing and paving of the filthy streets, the building of fortifications, of markets, and of churches, and above all of that glory of Gothic architecture, Nôtre Dame de la Victoire, founded to celebrate the triumph of Bouvines: such were some of the works planned or undertaken in the capital during this reign. Over the young University of Paris the King also stretched out a protecting hand, defending the students from the hostility of the townsfolk by the command that they should be admitted to the privileges enjoyed by priests. For this practical sympathy he and his successors were well repaid in the growth of an educated public opinion ready to exalt its patron the crown by tongue and pen.

Philip Augustus died in July 1223. Great among the many great figures of his day, French chroniclers have yet left no distinct impression of his personality. It would almost seem as if the will, the foresight, and the patience that have won him fame in the eyes of posterity, built up a baffling barrier between his character and those who actually saw him. Men recognized him as a king to be admired and feared, 'august' in his conquests, terrible in his wrath if any dared cross his will, but his reserve, his indifference to court gaiety, his rigid attitude of dislike to those who used oaths or blasphemy, they found wholly unsympathetic and strange. Of the great work he had done for France they were too close to judge fairly, and would have understood him better had he been rash and heedless of design like the Lion-Heart. For a real appreciation of Philip Augustus we must turn to his modern biographer.

'He had found France a small realm hedged in by mighty rivals. When he began his reign but a very small portion of the French-speaking people owned his sway. As suzerain his power was derided. Even as immediate lord he was defied and set at nought. But when he died the whole face of France was changed. The King of the Franks was undisputedly the king of by far the greater part of the land, and the internal strength

of his government had advanced as rapidly and as securely as the external power.'

Such was the change in France itself, but we can estimate also to-day, what no contemporary of Philip Augustus could have realized, the effect of that change on Europe, when France from a collection of feudal fiefs stood forth at last a nation in the modern sense, ready to take her place as a leader amongst her more backward neighbours.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

Louis VII of France	1137 47
Henry II of England	1154–89
Philip II of France	1180–1223
John, King of England	1199–1216
Battle of Bouvines	1214

XIV

EMPIRE AND PAPACY

WHEN the Emperor Henry IV crossed the ice-bound Alps on his journey of submission to Canossa he was accompanied by a faithful knight, Frederick of Buren, whom he later rewarded for his loyalty with the hand of his daughter and the title Duke of Suabia. Frederick's son was elected Emperor as Conrad III,[1] the first of the imperial line of Hohenstaufen that was destined to carry on through several generations the war between Empire and Papacy.

The Hohenstaufen received their name from a hill on which stood one of Frederick of Buren's strongest castles, but they were also called 'Waiblingen' after a town in their possession; while the House of Bavaria, their chief rivals, was called 'Welf' after an early ancestor. The feud of the Waiblingen and the Welfs that convulsed Germany had no less devastating an effect upon Italy, always exposed to influence from beyond the Alps, and the names of the rivals, corrupted on Italian tongues into 'Ghibellines' and 'Guelfs', became party cries throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In our last chapter we spoke of French 'communes', municipalities that rebelled against their overlords, setting up a government of their own: the same process of emancipation was at work in North Italy only that it was able to act with greater rapidity and success for a time on account of the national tendency towards separation and the vigour of town life.

'In France', says a thirteenth-century Italian, in surprise, 'only the townspeople dwell in towns: the knights and noble ladies stay . . . on their own demesnes.' Certainly the contrast with his native Lombardy was strong. There each city lived like a fortified kingdom on its hill-top, or in the midst of wide

[1] See p. 152.

plains, cut off from its neighbours by suspicion, by jealousy, by competition. In the narrow streets noble and knight jostled shoulders perforce with merchants, students, mountebanks, and beggars. The limits of space dictated that many things in life must be shared in common, whether religious processions or plagues, and if street fighting flourished in consequence so also did class intimacy and a sharpening of wits as well as of swords. Thus the towns of North Italy, like flowers in a hot-house, bore fruits of civilization in advance of the world outside, whether in commerce, painting, or the art of self-government; and visitors from beyond the Alps stared astonished at merchants' luxurious palaces that made the castles of their own princes seem mere barbarian strongholds.

Yet this profitable independence was not won without struggles so fierce and continuous that they finally endangered the political freedom in whose interests they had originally been waged. At first the struggle was with barbarian invaders; and here, as in the case of Rome and the Popes, it was often the local bishops who, when emperors at Constantinople ceased to govern except in name, fostered the young life of the city states and educated their citizens in a rough knowledge of war and statecraft.

With the dawn of feudalism bishops degenerated into tyrants, and municipalities began to elect consuls and advisory councils and under their leadership to rebel against their former benefactors, and to establish governments independent of their control.

The next danger was from within: cities are swayed more easily than nations, and too often the 'communes' of Lombardy became the prey of private factions or of more powerful city neighbours. Class warred against class and city against city; and out of their struggles arose leagues and counter-leagues, bewildering to follow like the ever-changing colours of a kaleidoscope.

Into this atmosphere of turmoil the quarrel between Popes and Holy Roman Emperors, begun by Henry IV and Hildebrand and carried on by the Hohenstaufen and the inheritors of Hildebrand's ideals, entered from the 'communes' point of view

like a heaven-sent opportunity for establishing their independence. In the words of a tenth-century bishop: 'The Italians always wish to have two masters that they may keep one in check by the other.'

The cities that followed the Hohenstaufen were labelled 'Ghibelline', those that upheld the Pope 'Guelf'; and at first, and indeed throughout the contest where cruelty and treachery were concerned, there was little to choose between the rivals. Later, however, the fierce imperialism of Frederick I was to give to the warfare of his opponents, the Guelfs, a patriotic aspect.

Frederick I, the 'Barbarossa' of the Third Crusade, was a Hohenstaufen on his father's side, a Welf on his mother's; and it had been the hope of those who elected him Emperor that 'like a corner-stone he would bind the two together... that thus with God's blessing he might end their ancient quarrel'. At first it appeared this hope might be realized, for the new Emperor made a friend of his cousin Henry the Lion who, as Duke of Bavaria and Saxony, was heir of the Welf ambitions. Frederick also, by his firm and business-like rule, established what the chroniclers called such 'unwonted peace' that 'men seemed changed, the world a different one, the very Heaven milder and softer'.

Unfortunately Frederick, who has been aptly described as an 'imperialist Hildebrand', regarded the peace of Germany merely as a stepping-stone to wider ambitions. Justinian, who had ruled Europe from Constantinople, was his model, and with the help of lawyers from the University of Bologna, whom he handsomely rewarded for their services, he revived all the old imperial claims over North Italy that men had forgotten or allowed to slip into disuse. The 'communes' found that rights and privileges for which their ancestors had fought and died were trampled under foot by an imperial official, the *podestà*, sent as supreme governor to each of the more important towns: taxes were imposed and exacted to the uttermost coin by his iron hand: complaint or rebellion were punished by torture and death.

'Death for freedom is the next best thing to freedom,' cried the men of Crema, flaming into wild revolt, while Milan shut her

gates against her *podestà* in an obstinate three years' siege. Deliverance was not yet, and Frederick and his vast army of Germans desolated the plains: Crema was burned, her starving population turned adrift: the glory of Milan was reduced to a stone quarry: Pope Alexander III who, feeling his own independence threatened by imperial demands, had supported the movement for liberty, was driven from Rome and forced to seek refuge in France. Everywhere the Ghibellines triumphed, and it was in these black days in Italy that the Guelfs ceased for a time to be a faction and became patriots, while the Pope stood before the world the would-be saviour of his land from a foreign yoke.

Amid the smouldering ruins of Milan the Lombard League sprang into life: town after town, weary of German oppression and insolence, offered their allegiance: even Venice, usually selfish in the safe isolation of her lagoons, proffered ships and money. Milan was rebuilt, and a new city, called after the patriot Pope 'Alessandria', was founded on a strategic site. *Alessandria degla paglia*, 'Alessandria of the straw', Barbarossa nicknamed it contemptuously, threatening to burn it like a heap of weeds; but the new walls withstood his best engines, and plague and the damp cold of winter devastated his armies encamped around them.

The political horizon was not, indeed, so fair for the Emperor as in the early days of his reign. Germany seethed with plots in her master's absence, and Frederick had good reason to suspect that Henry the Lion was their chief author, the more that he had sulkily refused to share in this last Italian campaign. Worst of all was the news that Alexander III, having negotiated alliances with the Kings of France and England, had returned to Italy and was busy stirring up any possible seeds of revolt against Frederick, whom he had excommunicated.

In the year 1176, at Legnano, fifteen miles from Milan, the armies of the League and Empire met in decisive battle, Barbarossa nothing doubting of his success against mere armed citizens; but the spirit of the men of Crema survived in the 'Company of Death', a bodyguard of Milanese knights sworn

to protect their *carroccio*, or sacred cart, or else to fall beside it. Upon the *carroccio* was raised a figure of Christ with arms outstretched, beneath his feet an altar, while from a lofty pole hung the banner of St. Ambrose, patron saint of Milan.

When the battle opened the first terrific onslaught of German cavalry broke the Milanese lines; but the Company of Death, reckless in their resolve, rallied the waverers and turned defence into attack. In the ensuing struggle the Emperor was unhorsed, and, as the rumour spread through the ranks that he had been killed, the Germans broke, and their retreat became a wild, unreasoning rout that bore their commander back on its tide, unable to stem the current, scarcely able to save himself.

Such was the battle of Legnano, worthy to be remembered not as an isolated twelfth-century victory of one set of forces against another, but as one of the first very definite advances in the great campaign for liberty that is still the battle of the world. At Venice in the following year the Hohenstaufen acknowledged his defeat and was reconciled to the Church; while by the 'Perpetual Peace of Constance' signed in 1183 he granted to the communes of North Italy 'all the royal rights (regalia) which they had ever had or at the moment enjoyed'.

Such rights—coinage, the election of officials and judges, the power to raise and control armies, to impose and exact taxes—are the pillars on which democracy must support her house of freedom. Yet since 'freedom' to the mediaeval mind too often implied the right to oppress some one else or maintain a state of anarchy, too much stress must not be laid on the immediate gains. North Italy in the coming centuries was to fall again under foreign rule, her 'communes' to abuse and betray the rights for which the Company of Death had risked their lives: yet, in spite of this taint of ignorance and treachery, the victory of Legnano had won for Europe something infinitely precious, the knowledge that tyrants could be overthrown by the popular will and feudal armies discomfited by citizen levies.

Barbarossa returned to Germany to vent his rage on Henry the Lion, to whose refusal to accompany him to Italy he considered his defeat largely due. Strong in the support of the

Church, to which he was now reconciled, he summoned his cousin to appear before an imperial Diet and make answer to the charge of having confiscated ecclesiastical lands and revenues for his own use. Henry merely replied to this mandate by setting fire to Church property in Saxony, and in his absence the ban of outlawry was passed against him by the Diet. Here again was the old 'Waiblingen' and 'Welf' feud bursting into flame, like a fire that has been but half-suppressed, and cousinship went to the wall. Henry the Welf was a son-in-law of Henry II of England and had made allies of Philip Augustus and the King of Denmark: his Duchy of Bavaria in the south and of Saxony in the north covered a third of German territory: he had been winning military laurels in a struggle against the Slavs, while Frederick had been losing Lombardy. Thus he pitted himself against the Emperor, unmindful that even in Germany the hands of the political clock were moving forward and feudalism slowly giving up its dominion.

To the dawning sense of German nationality Barbarossa was something more than first among his barons, he was a king supported by the Church, and Bavarians and Saxons came reluctantly to the rebel banner; while, as the campaign developed, the other princes saw their fellow vassal beaten and despoiled of his lands and driven into exile without raising a finger to help him.

Frederick allowed Henry the Lion to keep his Brunswick estates, but Saxony and Bavaria he divided up amongst minor vassals, in order to avoid the risk of another powerful rival. Master of Germany not merely in name but in power, he and his successors could have built up a strong monarchy, as Philip II and the House of Capet were to do in France, had not the siren voice of Italy called them to wreck on her shifting policies.

Hitherto we have spoken chiefly of North Italy; but Frederick I bound Germany to her southern neighbours by fresh ties when he married his eldest son Henry in 1187 to Constance, heiress of the Norman kingdom of Naples and Sicily. By this alliance he hoped to establish a permanent Hohenstaufen counterpoise in the south to the alliance of the Pope and the Guelf towns in

the north. Triumphant over the wrathful but helpless Roman See, he felt himself an emperor indeed, and having crowned his son Henry as 'Caesar', in imitation of classic times, he rode away to the Third Crusade, still lusting after adventure and glory.

The news of his death in Asia Minor[1] swept Germany with sadness and pride. Like all his house, he had been cruel and hard; but vices like these seemed to weigh little to the mediaeval mind against the peace and prosperity enjoyed under his rule. Legends grew about his name, and the peasants whispered that he had not died but slept beneath the sandstone rocks, and would awake again when his people were in danger to be their leader and protector.

Henry VI, who succeeded Frederick in the Empire, succeeded also to his dreams and the pitfalls that they inspired. One of his earliest struggles had been the finally successful attempt to secure Sicily against the claims of Count Tancred, an illegitimate grandson of the last ruler. Great were the sufferings of the unhappy Sicilians who had adopted the Norman's cause; for Henry, having bribed or coerced the Pope and North Italy into a temporary alliance, exacted a bitter vengeance. Tancred's youthful son, blinded and mutilated, was sent with his mother to an Alpine prison to end his days, while in the dungeons of Palermo and Apulia torture and starvation brought to his followers death as a blessed relief from pain.

Queen Constance, who had been powerless to check these atrocities, turned against her husband in loathing: the Pope excommunicated their author; but Henry VI laughed contemptuously at both. It was his threefold ambition: first, to make the imperial crown not elective but hereditary in the House of Hohenstaufen; next, to tempt the German princes into accepting this proposition by the incorporation of Naples and Sicily as a province of the Empire; and thirdly, to rule all his dominions from his southern kingdom, with the Pope at Rome, as in the days of Otto the Great, the chief bishop in his empire.

Strong-willed, persistent, resourceful, with the imagination that sees visions, and the practical brain of a man of business who

[1] See p. 154.

can realize them, Henry VI, had he lived longer, might have gained at least a temporary recognition of his schemes; but in 1197 he died at the age of thirty-two, leaving a son not yet three years old as the heir of Hohenstaufen ambitions. Twelve months later died also Queen Constance, having reversed as much as she could during her short widowhood of her hated husband's German policy, and having bequeathed the little King of Naples to the guardianship of the greatest of mediaeval Popes and the champion of the Guelfs, Innocent III.

At the coronation of Innocent III the officiating priest had used these words: 'Take the tiara and know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the ruler of the world, the Vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' To Lothario di Conti this utterance was but the confirmation of his own beliefs, as unshakable as those of Hildebrand, as wide in their scope as the imperialism of Frederick Barbarossa or Henry VI. 'The Lord Jesus Christ,' he declared, 'has set up one ruler over all things as His Universal Vicar, and as all things in Heaven, Earth, and Hell bow the knee to Christ, so should all obey Christ's Vicar that there be one flock and one shepherd.' Again: 'Princes have power on earth, priests have also power in Heaven.'

In illustration of these views he likened the Papacy to the sun, the Empire to the lesser light of the moon, and recalled how Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane gave to St. Peter two swords. By these, he explained, were meant temporal and spiritual power, and emperors who claimed to exercise the former could only do so by the gracious consent of St. Peter's successors, since 'the Lord gave Peter the rule not only of the universal Church but also the rule of the whole world'.

Gregory VII had made men wonder in the triumph of Canossa whether such an ideal of the Papacy could ever be realized; but as if in proof he had been hunted from Rome and died in exile. It was left to Innocent III to exhibit the partial fulfilment, at any rate, of all that his predecessor had dreamed. In character no saintly Bernard of Clairvaux, but a clear-brained practical statesman, he set before himself the vision of a kingdom of God on earth after the pattern of earthly kingdoms; and to this end, that

he sincerely believed carried with it the blessing of God for the perfecting of mankind, he used every weapon in his armoury.

Sometimes his ambitions failed, as when, in a real glow of enthusiasm, he preached the Fourth Crusade—an expedition that ended in Venice, who had promised the necessary ships, diverting the crusaders to storm her a coveted port on the Dalmatian coast, and afterwards to sack and burn Constantinople in the mingled interests of commerce and pillage. His anger at the news that the remonstrances of his legates had been ignored could hardly at first be extinguished. Not thus had been his plan of winning Eastern Christendom to the Catholic Faith and of destroying the infidel; for the Latin Empire of Constantinople, set up by the victorious crusaders, was obviously too weak to maintain for long its tyranny over hostile Greeks, or to serve as an effective barrier against the Turks. Statesmanship, however, prompted him to reap what immediate harvest he could from the blunders of his faithless sons; and he accepted the submission of the Church in Constantinople as a debt long owing to the Holy See.

The Fourth Crusade, in spite of the extension of Rome's ecclesiastical influence, must be reckoned as one of Innocent's failures. In the West, on the other hand, the atmosphere created by his personality and statecraft made the name of 'The Lord Innocent' one of weight and fear to his enemies, of rejoicing to his friends. When upholding Queen Ingeborg he had stood as a moral force, bending Philip Augustus to his will by his convinced determination; and this same tenacity of belief and purpose, added to the purity of his personal life and the charm of his manner, won him the affection of the Roman populace, usually so hostile to its Vicars.

Mediaeval popes were, as a rule, respected less in Italy than beyond the Alps, and least of all in their own capital, where too many spiritual gifts had been seen debased for material ends, and papal acts were often at variance with pious professions. During the pontificate of Innocent III, however, we find the 'Prefect', the imperial representative at Rome, accept investiture at his hands, the 'Senator', chief magistrate of the municipality, do

him homage; and through this double influence his control became paramount over the city government.

In Naples and Sicily he was able to continue the policy of Constance, drive out rebellious German barons, struggle against the Saracens in Sicily, and develop the education of his ward, the young King of Naples, as the spiritual son who should one day do battle for his ideals. 'God has not spared the rod,' he wrote to Frederick II. 'He has taken away your father and mother: yet he has given you a worthier father, His Vicar; and a better mother, the Church.'

In Lombardy, where the Guelfs naturally turned to him as their champion, the papal way was comparatively smooth, for the cruelty of Barbarossa and his son Henry VI had aroused hatred and suspicion on all sides. Thus Innocent found himself more nearly the master of Italy than any Pope before his time, and from Italy his patronage and alliances extended like a web all over Europe.

Philip Augustus of France, trying to ignore and defy him, found in the end the anger he aroused worth placating: John of England changed his petulant defiance into submission and an oath of homage: Portugal accepted him as her suzerain: rival kings of Hungary sought his arbitration: even distant Armenia sent ambassadors to ask his protection. His most impressive triumph, however, was secured in his dealings with the Empire.

Henry VI had wished, we have seen, to make the imperial crown hereditary; but no German prince would have been willing to accept the child he left as heir to his troubled fortunes. The choice of the electors therefore wavered between another Hohenstaufen, Philip of Suabia, brother of the late Emperor, and the Welf Otto, son of Henry the Lion. The votes were divided, and each claimant afterwards declared himself the legally elected emperor, one with the title Philip II, the other with that of Otto IV.

For ten long years Germany was devastated by their civil wars. Otto, as the Guelf representative, gained the support of Innocent the Great, to whom the claimants at one time appealed for arbitration; but Philip refused to submit to this judgement

in favour of his rival, believing that he himself had behind him the majority of the German princes and of the official class.

'Inasmuch,' declared Innocent, 'as our dearest son in Christ, Otto, is industrious, prudent, discreet, strong and constant, himself devoted to the Church . . . we by the authority of St. Peter receive him as King and will in due course bestow on him the imperial crown.'

Here was papal triumph! Rome no longer patronized but patron, with Otto on his knees, gratefully promising submission and homage with every kind of ecclesiastical privilege, to complete the picture. Yet circumstances change traditions as well as people, and when the death of Philip of Suabia left him master of Germany, the Guelf Otto found his old ideals impracticable: he became a Ghibelline in policy, announced his imperial rights over Lombardy, even over some of the towns belonging to the Pope, while he loudly announced his intention of driving the young Hohenstaufen from Naples.

Innocent's wrath at this *volte-face* was unbounded. Otto, no longer his 'dearest son in Christ', was now a perjurer and schismatic, whose excommunication and deposition were the immediate duty of Rome. Neither, however, was likely to be effective unless the Pope could provide Italy and Germany with a rival, whose dazzling claims, backed by papal support, would win him followers wherever he went. In this crisis Innocent found his champion in the Hohenstaufen prince denounced by Otto, a lad educated almost since infancy in the tenets and ambitions of the Catholic Church.

Frederick, King of Naples and Sicily, was an interesting development of hereditary tastes and the atmosphere in which he had been reared. To the southern blood that leaped in his veins he owed perhaps his hot passions, his sensuous appreciation of luxury and art, his almost Saracen contempt for women save as toys to amuse his leisure hours. From the Hohenstaufen he imbibed strength, ambition, and cruelty, from the Norman strain on his mother's side his reckless daring and treachery. With the ordinary education of a prince of his day, Frederick's qualities and vices might have merely produced

a warrior king of rather exceptional ability; but thanks to the papal tutors provided by Innocent, the boy's naturally quick brain and imagination were stirred by a course of studies far superior to what his lay contemporaries usually enjoyed, and he emerged in manhood with a real love of books and culture, and with an eager curiosity on such subjects as philosophy and natural history.

In the royal charter by which he founded the University of Naples Frederick expressed his intention that here 'those within the Kingdom who had hunger for knowledge might find the food for which they were yearning'; and his court at Palermo, if from one aspect dissolute and luxurious, was also a centre for men of wit and knowledge against whose brains the King loved to test his own quips and theories.

When Frederick reached Rome, on Innocent's hasty summons to unsheath the sword of the Hohenstaufen against Otto, much of his character was as yet a closed book even to himself. Impulsive and eager, like any ambitious youth of seventeen called to high adventure, and with a genuine respect for his guardian, he did not look far ahead; but kneeling at the Pope's feet, pledged his homage and faith before he rode away northwards to win an empire. In Germany a considerable following awaited him, lifelong opponents of Otto on account of his Welf blood, and others who hated him for his churlish manners. Amongst them Frederick scattered lavishly some money he had borrowed from the Republic of Genoa, and this generosity, combined with his Hohenstaufen strength and daring, increased the happy reputation that papal legates had already established for him in many quarters.

In December 1212 he was crowned in Mainz. Civil war followed, embittered by papal and imperial leagues, but in 1214 Otto IV was decisively beaten at Bouvines in the struggle with Philip II of France that we have already described,[1] and the tide which had been previously turning against him now swept away his few friends and last hopes. With the entry of his young rival into the Rhineland provinces the dual Empire

[1] See p. 169.

ceased to exist, and Frederick was crowned in Aachen, the old capital of Charlemagne.

Innocent III had now reached the summit of his power, for his pupil and protégé sat on the throne of Rome's imperial rival. In the same year he called a Council to the Lateran Palace, the fourth gathering of its kind, to consider the two objects dearest to his heart, 'the deliverance of the Holy Land and the reform of the Church Universal'. Crusading zeal, however, he could not rouse again: to cleanse and spiritualize the life of the Church in the thirteenth century was to prove a task beyond men of finer fibre than Innocent: but, as an illustration of his immense influence over Europe, the Fourth Lateran Council with its dense submissive crowds, representative of every land and class, was a fitting end to his pontificate.

In the year 1216 Innocent III died—the most powerful of all Popes, a striking personality whose life by kindly fate did not outlast his glory. In estimating Innocent's ability as a statesman there stands one blot against his record in the clear light shed by after-events, namely, the short-sighted policy that once again united the Kingdom of Naples to the Empire, and laid the Papacy between the upper millstone of Lombardy and the nether millstone of southern Italy. Excuse may be found in Innocent's desperate need of a champion with Otto IV threatening his papal heritage, added to his belief in the promises of the young Hohenstaufen to remain his faithful vassal. He also tried to safeguard the future by making Frederick publicly declare that he would bequeath Naples to a son who would not stand for election to the Empire; but in trusting the word of the young Emperor he had sown a wind from which his successors were to reap a whirlwind.

The new Emperor was just twenty years old when Innocent died. Either to please his guardian, or moved by a momentary religious impulse, he had taken the Cross immediately after his entry into Aachen; but the years passed and he showed himself in no haste to fulfil the vow. Much of his time was spent in his loved southern kingdom, where he completed Innocent's work of reducing to submission the Saracen population that

had remained in Sicily since the Mahometan conquest.[1] As infidels the Papacy had regarded these Arabs with special hatred; but Frederick, once assured that they were so weak that they would be in future dependent on his favour, began protecting instead of persecuting them. He also encouraged their silk industry by building them a town, Lucera, on the Neapolitan coast, where they could pursue it undisturbed; while he enrolled large numbers of Arab warriors in his army, and used them to enforce his will on the feudal aristocracy, descendants of the Norman adventurers of the eleventh century.

So successful was he in playing off one section of his subjects against another, opposing or aiding the different classes as policy dictated, that he soon reigned as an autocrat in Naples. Many of the nobles' strongholds were levelled with the dust: their claim to wage private war was forbidden on pain of death: cases were taken away from their law-courts and those of the feudal bishops to be decided by royal justices: towns were deprived of their freedom to elect their own magistrates, while crown officials sent from Palermo administered the laws, and imposed and collected taxes.

On the whole these changes were beneficial, for private privileges had been greatly abused in Naples, and Frederick, like Philip Augustus or the Angevin Henry II, had the instinct and ability to govern well when he chose. Nevertheless the subjugation of 'the Kingdom', as Naples was usually called in Italy, was of course received with loud outcries of anger by Neapolitan barons and churchmen, who hastened to inform the Holy See that their ruler loved infidels better than Christians and kept an eastern harem at Palermo.

Honorius III, the new Pope, accepted such reports and scandals with dismay. He had himself noted uneasily Frederick's absorption in Italian affairs and frequently reminded him of his crusading vow. Being gentle and slow to commit himself to any decided step however, it was not till the Hohenstaufen deliberately broke his promise to Innocent III, and had his eldest son Henry crowned King of the Romans as well as King of

[1] See p. 115.

Naples, thus acknowledging him as his heir in both Germany and Italy, that Honorius's wrath flamed into a threat of excommunication. For a time it spread no farther, since Frederick was lavish in explanations and in promises of friendship that he had no intention of fulfilling, while the old Pope chose to believe him rather than risk an actual conflagration. At last, however, the patient Honorius died.

Gregory IX, the new Pope, was of the family of Innocent, and shared to the full his views of the world-wide supremacy of the Church. An old man of austere life and feverish energy, he regarded Frederick as a monster of ingratitude and became almost hysterical and quite unreasonable in his efforts to humble him. Goaded by his constant reproaches and threats, the Emperor began to make leisurely preparations at Brindisi for his crusade; but when he at last started, an epidemic of fever, to which he himself fell a victim, forced him to put back to port. Gregory, refusing to believe in this illness as anything more than an excuse for delay, at once excommunicated him; and then, though Frederick set sail as soon as he was well enough, repeated the ban, giving as his reason that the Emperor had not waited to receive his pardon for the first offence like an obedient son of the Church.

A crusader excommunicated by the Head of Christendom first for not fulfilling his vow and then for fulfilling it! This was a degrading and ridiculous sight; and Frederick, now definitely hostile to Rome, continued on his way, determined with obstinate pride that, if not for the Catholic Faith, then for his own glory, he would carry out his purpose. The Templars refused him support: the Christians still left in the neighbourhood of Acre helped him half-heartedly or stood aloof, frightened by the warnings of their priests, but Frederick achieved more without the Pope's aid than other crusaders had done of late years with his blessing. By force of arms, and still more by skilful negotiations, he obtained from the Sultan possession of Jerusalem, and entering in triumph placed on his head the crown of the Latin kings.

His vow fulfilled, he sailed for Sicily, and the Pope, whose

troops in Frederick's absence had been harrying 'the Kingdom', hastily patched up a peace at San Germano. 'I will remember the past no more,' cried Frederick, but anger burned within him at papal hostility. 'The Emperor has come to me with the zeal of a devoted son,' said Gregory, but there was no trust in his heart that corresponded to his words.

A Hohenstaufen, who had taken Jerusalem unaided, supreme in Naples, supreme also in Germany, stretching out his imperial sceptre over Lombardy! What Pope, who believed that the future of the Church rested on the temporal independence of Rome, could sleep tranquilly in his bed with such a vision?

It is not possible to describe here in any detail the renewed war between Empire and Papacy that followed the inevitable breakdown of the treaty of San Germano. Very bitter was the spirit in which it was waged on both sides. Frederick, whatever his intentions, could not forget that it was the Father of Christendom who had tried to ruin his crusade. The remembrance did not so much shake his faith as wake in him an exasperated sense of injustice that rendered him deaf to those who counselled compromise. Unable to rid himself wholly of the fear of papal censure, he yet saw clearly enough that the sin for which Popes relentlessly pursued him was not his cruelty, nor profligacy, nor even his toleration of Saracens, but the fact that he was King of Naples as well as Holy Roman Emperor.

To a man of Frederick's haughty temperament there was but one absolution he could win for this crime, so to master Rome that he could squeeze her judgements to his fancy like a sponge between his strong fingers. 'Italy is my heritage,' he wrote to the Pope, 'and all the world knows it.'

In his passionate determination to obtain this heritage statesmanship was thrown to the winds. He had planned a strong monarchy in Naples, but in Germany he undermined the foundations of royal authority that Barbarossa and Henry VI had begun to lay. 'Let every Prince', he declared, 'enjoy in peace, according to the improved custom of his land, his immunities, jurisdictions, counties and hundreds, both those which belong to

him in full right, and those which have been granted out to him in fief.'

The Italian Hohenstaufen only sought from his northern kingdom, whose good government he thus carelessly sacrificed to feudal anarchy, sufficient money to pay for his campaigns beyond the Alps and leisure to pursue them. In the words of a modern historian, 'he bartered his German kingship for an immediate triumph over his hated foe.'

At first victory rewarded his energy and skill. His hereditary enemy, the 'Lombard League', had tampered with the loyalty of his eldest son, Henry, King of the Romans, whom he had left to rule in Germany: but Frederick discovered the plot in time and deposed and imprisoned the culprit. In despair at the prospect of lifelong imprisonment held out to him, the young Henry flung himself to his death down a steep mountain-side; and Conrad, his younger brother, a boy of eight, was crowned in his stead.

In North Italy Frederick pursued the policy not so much of trampling down resistance with his German levies, like his grandfather Barbarossa, as of employing Italian nobles of the Ghibelline party, whom he supported and financed that they might fight his battles and make his wrath terrible in the popular hearing. Such were Eccelin de Romano and his brother Alberigo, lords of Verona and Vicenza, whose tyranny and cruelties seemed abnormal even in their day.

'The Devil's own Servant' Eccelin is called by a contemporary, who describes how he slaughtered in cold blood eleven thousand prisoners.

'I believe, in truth, no such wicked man has been from the beginning of the world unto our own days: for all men trembled at him as a rush quivers in the water . . . he who lived to-day was not sure of the morrow, the father would seek out and slay his son, and the son his father or any of his kinsfolk to please this man.'

Alberigo 'hanged twenty-five of the greatest men of Treviso who had in no wise offended or harmed him'; and as the prisoners struggled in their death agonies he thrust among their

feet their wives, daughters, and sisters, whom he afterwards turned adrift half-naked to seek protection where they might.

Revenge when this 'Limb of Satan' fell into the hands of his enemies was of a brutality to match; for Alberigo and his young sons were torn in pieces by an infuriated mob, his wife and daughters burned alive, 'though they were noble maidens and the fairest in the world and guiltless.'

Passions ran too deep between Guelf and Ghibelline to distinguish innocency, or to spare youth or sex. Cruelty, the most despicable and infectious of vices, was the very atmosphere of the thirteenth century, desecrating what has been described from another aspect as 'an age of high ideals and heroic lives'.

It is remarked with some surprise by contemporaries that Frederick II could pardon a joke at his own expense; but on the other hand we read of his cutting off the thumb of a notary who had misspelt his name, and callously ordering one of his servants, by way of amusement, to dive and dive again into the sea after a golden cup, until from sheer exhaustion he reappeared no more.

At Cortenuova the Lombard League was decisively beaten by the imperial forces, the *carroccio* of Milan seized and burned. Frederick, flushed with success, now declared that not only North but also Middle Italy was subject to his allegiance, and replied to a new excommunication by advancing into Romagna and besieging some of the papal towns. Gregory, worn out by grief and fury, died as his enemy approached the gates of Rome: and his immediate successor, unnerved by excitement, followed him to the grave before the cardinals who had elected him could proceed to his consecration.

Innocent IV, who now ascended the papal throne, had of old shown some sympathy to the imperial cause; but Frederick, when he heard of his election, is reported to have said, 'I have lost a friend, for no Pope can be a Ghibelline.' With the example of Otto IV in his mind he should have added that no Emperor could remain a Guelf.

Frederick had indeed gained an inveterate enemy, more dangerous than Gregory IX, because more politic and discreet.

From Lyons, whither he had fled, Innocent IV maintained unflinchingly the claims he could no longer set forth in Rome, declaring the victorious Emperor excommunicate and deposed. 'Has the Pope deposed me?' asked Frederick scornfully, when the news came. 'Bring me my crowns that I may see what he has taken away!'

One after another he placed on his head the seven crowns his attendants brought him, the royal crown of Germany and imperial diadem of Rome, the iron circlet of Lombardy, the crowns of Jerusalem, of Burgundy, of Sardinia, and of Sicily and Naples. 'See!' he said, 'Are they not all mine still? and none shall take them from me without a struggle.'

So the hideous war between Welf and Waiblingen, between Guelf and Ghibelline continued, and Germany and Italy were deluged with blood and flames. 'After the Emperor Frederick was put under the ban,' says a German chronicler, 'the robbers rejoiced over the spoils. Then were the ploughshares beaten into swords and reaping-hooks into lances. No one went anywhere without flint and steel to set on fire whatever he could kindle.'

The ebb from the high-water mark of the Emperor's fortunes was marked by the revolt and successful resistance of the Guelf city of Parma to the imperial forces—a defeat Frederick might have wiped out in fresh victory had not his own health begun to fail. In 1250 he died, still excommunicate, snatched away to hell, according to his enemies, not dead, according to many who from love or hate believed his personality of more than human endurance.

Yet Frederick, whether for good or ill, had perished, and with him his imperial ambitions. Popes might tremble at other nightmares, but the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire over Italy would no more haunt their dreams for many years. Naples also, to whose conquest and government he had devoted the best of his brain and judgement, was torn from his heirs and presented by his papal enemy to the French House of Anjou. Struggling against these usurpers the last of the royal line of Hohenstaufen, Conradin, son of Conrad, a lad of fifteen, gallant

and reckless as his grandfather, was captured in battle and beheaded.

Frederick had destroyed in Germany and built on sand elsewhere; and of all his conquests and achievements only their memory was to dazzle after-generations. *Stupor et Gloria Mundi* he was called by those who knew him, and in spite of his ultimate failure and his vices he still remains a 'wonder of the world', set above enemies and friends by his personality, the glory of his courage, his audacity, and his strength of purpose.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368-73.

Pope Alexander III	1159-81
Emperor Philip II	1197-1208
Emperor Otto IV	1197-1215
Fourth Lateran Council	1215
The Sixth Crusade	1228 9
Battle of Cortenuova	1237
Death of Conradin	1268

XV

LEARNING AND ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES

THE word 'progress' implies to modern men and women a moving forward towards a perfection as yet unknown, freshly imagined indeed by each generation: to the Middle Ages it meant rather a peering back through the mist of barbarian invasions to an idealized Christian Rome. Inspiration lay in the past, not merely in such political conceptions as the Holy Roman Empire, but in the domain of art and thought, where too often tradition laid her choking grip upon originality struggling for expression.

The painting of the early Middle Ages was stereotyped in the stiff though beautiful models of Byzantium, that 'Fathers of the Church' had insisted, by means of decrees passed at Church councils, should be considered as fitting representations of Christian subjects for all time. Less impressive but more life-like were the illuminations of missals and holy books, that, in illustrating the Gospels or lives of the Saints, reproduced the artist's own surroundings—the noble he could see from the window of his cell ride by with hawk or hounds, the labourer sowing or delving, the merchant with his money-bags, the man of fashion trailing his furred gown.

Vignettes such as these, with their neat craftsmanship of line and colour, their almost photographic love of detail, lend a reality to our glimpses of life in Europe from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries; yet great as is the debt we owe them, the real art of the Middle Ages was not consummated with the brush but with the builder's tools and sculptor's chisel.

Like the painter's, the architect's impulse was at first almost entirely religious, though guild-halls and universities followed

on the erection of churches and monasteries. Nourished on St. Augustine's belief in this life as a mere transitory journey towards the eternal 'City of God', mediaeval men and women saw this pilgrimage encompassed with a vast army of devils and saints, ranged in constant battle for the human soul. Only through faith and the kindly assistance of the Saints could man hope to beat off the legions of hell which hung like a pack of wolves about his footsteps, and nowhere with greater efficacy than in the sanctuary from which human prayer arose daily to God's throne.

Churches and chapels in modern times have become the property of a section of the public—that is, of those who think or believe in a certain way; and sometimes through poverty of purse or spirit, through bad workmanship or material, the architecture that results is shoddy or insignificant. In the Middle Ages his parish church was the most certain fact in every Christian's existence, from the day he was carried to the font for baptism until his last journey to rest beneath its shadow. Here he would make his confessions, his vows of repentance and amendment, and offer his worship and thanksgiving: here he would often find a fortified refuge from violence in the street outside, a school, a granary, a parish council-chamber.

What more natural than that mediaeval artists, their souls attune with the hopes and fears of their age, should realize their genius best in constructing and ornamenting buildings that were to all citizens alike the symbol of their belief? 'Let us build,' said the people of Siena in the thirteenth century, 'such a church to the glory of God that all men shall wonder!'

The cathedral, when completed, was but a third in size and grandeur of the original design, for the Black Death fell upon Siena and carried off her builders in the midst of their work; yet it remains magnificently arresting to modern eyes, as though the faith of those who planned and fashioned its slabs of black and white marble for the love of God and their city had breathed into their workmanship something of the mediaeval soul.

The same is true of 'Nôtre Dame de la Victoire' in Paris, founded by Philip Augustus, of which Victor Hugo says 'each

face, each stone, is a page of history'. It is true of nearly all mediaeval churches that have outlived the ravages of war and fire, memorials of an age, that if it lagged behind our own in ultimate achievement, was pre-eminent in one art at least —ecclesiastical architecture.

Where the architect stopped the mediaeval sculptor took up his work, at first with simple severity but later in a riot of imagination that peopled façades, vaulted roofs, and capitals of columns with the angels, demons, and hybrid monsters that haunted the fancy of the day.. The flying buttress, the invention of which made possible lofty clerestories with vast expanses of window, brought to perfection another art, the painting of glass. Here also the mediaeval artist excelled, and the crucibles in which he mixed the colours that hold us wrapt before the windows of Leon, Albi, and Chartres, still keep unsolved the secret of their transparent delicacy and depth.

In the architecture, the sculpture, and in the stained glass of the Middle Ages we see original genius at work, but in learning and culture Europe was slower to throw off the giant influence of Rome. Even under the crushing inroads of barbarian ignorance Italy had managed to keep alive the study of classical authors and of Roman law. Latin remained the language of the educated man or woman, the language in which the services of the Church were recited, sermons were preached, correspondence carried on, business transacted, and students in universities and schools addressed by their professors.

The advantages of a common tongue can be imagined: the comparative ease with which a pope or king could keep in touch with bishops or subjects of a different race; the accessibility of the best books to students of all nations, since scarcely a mediaeval author of repute would condescend to employ his own tongue: above all perhaps the ease with which an ambassador, a merchant, or a pilgrim could make himself understood on a journey across Europe, instead of torturing his brain with struggles after the right word in first one foreign dialect and then another.

This classical form, so rigidly withholding knowledge from the

grasp of the ignorant, had also its disadvantage; for many a mediaeval pen, that could have flown across the vellum in joyful intimacy in its owner's tongue, stumbled clumsily amidst Latin constructions, leaving in the end not a spontaneous record of current events, but a 'dry-as-dust' catalogue, in bad imitation of some Latin stylist. The modern world is more grateful to mediaeval culture for such lapses as Dante's *Divina Commedia* than for all the heavy Latin tomes, whose authors hoped for laurelled immortality.

For those in England and France who could not easily master Latin or found its stately periods too cumbrous for ordinary conversation, French, descended from the spoken Latin of the Roman soldier or merchant in Gaul, was in the Middle Ages, as to-day, the language of polite society. It possessed two distinct dialects, the 'langue d'œil' and the 'langue d'oc', so called because the northern Frenchman, including the Norman, was supposed to pronounce *oui* as *œil*, while his southern fellow countryman pronounced it as *oc*.

England, where, ever since the Conquest of William I, French had been the natural tongue of a semi-foreign court, owed an enormous literary impulse to the 'langue d'œil' during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; while the 'langue d'oc' that gave its name to a district in the south of France shared its poetry and romance between Provençals and Catalans. The descendants of the former are to-day French, of the latter Spanish: but in the eleventh century they were fellow subjects of the Counts of Toulouse, who ruled over a district stretching from the source of the Rhone to the Mediterranean, from the Italian Alps to the Ebro.

In this semi-independent kingdom there developed a civilization and culture of hot-house growth, precocious in its appreciation of the less violent pleasures of life, such as love, art, music, literature, but often corrupt in their enjoyment. The gay court of Toulouse paid no heed to St. Augustine's hell, whose fears haunted the rest of Europe in its more thoughtful moments. Joyous and inconsequent, it lived for the passing hour, and out of its atmosphere of dalliance and culture was born a race of

poet-singers. These troubadours (*trouvers* = discoverers) sang of love, whose silken fetters could hold in thrall knights and fair ladies; and their golden lyrics, now plaintive, now gay, were carried to the crowded cities of Italy and Spain, or found schools of imitators elsewhere, as in Germany amongst her thirteenth-century *minnesingers* (love-singers). In the north of France and in England appeared minstrels also, but their themes were less of love than of battle; and audiences revelled by castle and camp-fire in the 'gestes' or 'deeds' of Charlemagne and his Paladins, the chivalry of Arthur and his Knights, or in stirring Border ballads such as Chevy Chase.

The market-place, the camp, and the baronial hall, where were sung or recited these often imaginary stories of the past, were the schools of the many unlettered; just as the conversation of Arabs and Jews around the desert fires had stimulated the imagination of the young Mahomet; but for the few who could afford a sounder education there were the universities—Paris, Bologna, Oxford, to name but three of the most famous.

The word *universitas* implied in the Middle Ages a union of men;. such a corporation as the 'guilds' formed by fishmongers and drapers to protect their trade interests; and the universities had indeed originated for a similar purpose. Cities to-day that have universities in their midst are proud of the fact, and welcome new students; but in early mediaeval times an influx of young men of all ages from every part of Europe, many of them wild and unruly, some so poor that they must beg or steal their daily bread, was at first sight a very doubtful blessing. Street fights between nationalities who hated one another on principle, or between bands of students and citizens, were a common occurrence in the towns that learning honoured with her presence, and had their usual accompaniment of broken heads, fires, and looting. But for the *universitas* formed by masters and students to control and protect their members, these centres of education would probably have been stamped out by indignant tradesmen: as it was they had to fight for their existence.

Municipalities looked with no lenient eye upon a corporation

that seemed to them a 'state within a state', threatening their own right to govern all within the city. It was not until after many generations that they understood the meaning of the word co-operation, that is, the possibility of assisting instead of hindering the work of the *universitas*. Sometimes a king like Philip Augustus insisted on toleration by granting to his students the 'privilege of clergy', but as the University grew it became able to enforce its own lessons. In the thirteenth century the Masters of Paris closed their lecture-halls and led away their flock, in protest for what they considered unfair treatment by the city authorities during a riot, and their absence taught Parisians that, in spite of head-breakings, the students were an asset, not a loss, to municipal life. Under the protection therefore of a papal 'bull', they returned a few weeks later in triumph to the Latin Quarter.

It was only by degrees that colleges where the students could live were erected, or that anything resembling the elaborate organization of a modern university was evolved. Students lodged where they could, and 'masters' lived on the goodwill of those who paid their fees, and starved if their popularity waned and with it their audience. The life of both teacher and pupil was vague and hazardous, with a background of poverty and crime lurking at the street corners to ruin the unwary or foolish. Nor was the period of study a mere 'passing sojourn' like some modern 'terms': the Bachelor of Arts at Oxford or Paris must be a student of five years' standing, the Master of Arts calculated on devoting three years more to gaining his final degree, a Doctor of Theology would be faced with eight years' hard work at least. It might almost be said that higher education under these circumstances became a profession.

To Bologna, the greatest of Italian universities, went those who wished to study Roman law at the fountain-head. This does not mean to stir up the legal dust of a dead empire out of a student's curiosity, but to master a living system of law that barbarian invaders had gradually grafted on to their own national codes. In the eleventh century the laws of Justinian[1]

[1] See p. 49.

were as much or more revered than in his own day. We have seen that Frederick Barbarossa set the lawyers of Bologna to work to justify from old legal documents the claims he wished to establish over Lombardy; and when they had succeeded to his satisfaction he rewarded them with gifts and knighthood, showing what value he put on their achievement. This is a very good example of the respect felt by mediaeval minds for the laws and title-deeds of an earlier age, even though the tyranny that resulted led the 'Lombard League' to dispute such claims.

Still more closely allied than the civil codes of Europe to the old Roman legal texts was the 'Canon' law of the Church that had been directly based upon classic models; and with the rise of Hildebrand's world-wide ambitions its decisions assumed a growing importance and demanded an enormous army of trained lawyers to interpret and arrange them. For youths of a practical and ambitious turn of mind here was a course of study leading to a profession profitable in all ages; and a text-book was provided for such budding lawyers in the *decretum* of Gratian, a monk who in the twelfth century compiled a full and authoritative text of Canon law.

The existence of the Ecclesiastical Courts, in which Canon law was administered, we have already mentioned in discussing the quarrel of Henry II of England and Thomas Becket.[1] Founded originally to deal with purely ecclesiastical cases and officials, they tended in time to draw within their competence any one over whom the Church could claim protection and any causes that affected the rites of the Catholic Church. It was a wide net with a very small mesh, as the Angevin Henry II and other lay rulers of Europe found. The protection that spread its wings over priests and clerks stretched also to crusaders, widows, and orphans: the jurisdiction of the Church Courts claimed not merely moral questions such as heresy, sacrilege, and perjury, but all matters connected with probate of wills, marriage and divorce, and even libel.

Rome became a hive of ecclesiastical lawyers, with the Pope, like the Roman emperors of old, the supreme law-giver and

See p. 164.

final court of appeal for all Church Courts of Europe. His rule was absolute, at least in theory, for by his power of 'dispensation' he could set aside, if he considered advisable, the very Canon law his officials administered. He could also summon to his *curia*, or papal court, any case on which he wished to pronounce judgement, at whatever stage in its litigation in an inferior ecclesiastical court.

Under the Pope in an ordered hierarchy, corresponding to the feudal arrangement of lay society, came the metropolitans, who received from his hand or from those of his legates the narrow woollen scarf, or *pallium*, that was the symbol of their authority. Next in order came the diocesan bishops with their 'officials', the archdeacons and rural deans, each with their own court and measure of jurisdiction.

The Pope's will went forth to Christendom in the form of letters called 'bulls', from the *bulla* or heavy seal that was attached to them. Against those who paid no heed to their contents he could hurl either the weapon of excommunication— that is, of personal outlawry from the Church — or else, if the offender were a king or a city, the still more blasting 'interdict' that fell on ruler and ruled alike. The land that groaned under an interdict was bereft of all spiritual comfort: no priest might say public Mass, baptize a new-born child, perform the marriage service, console the dying with 'supreme unction', or bury the dead. The very church bells would ring no more.

It was under this pressure of spiritual starvation, when the Saints seemed to have withdrawn their sheltering arms and the demons to have gathered joyfully to a harvest of lost souls, that John of England was brought by the curses of his people to turn to Rome in repentance and submission. Yet, as in the case of most weapons, familiarity bred contempt, and too frequent use of powers of 'interdict' and 'excommunication' was to blunt their efficacy—a Frederick II, the oft-excommunicated, proved able to conquer Jerusalem and dominate Italy even under the papal ban.

The Church, in her claims to world empire, demanded in truth an obedience it was beyond her ability to enforce. She also laid herself open to temptations to which from the nature of her

temporal ambitions she must inevitably succumb. No such elaborate and expensive administration as emanated from her *curia* could continue without an inexhaustible flow of money into her treasury. Lawyers, priests, legates, cardinals, the Pope himself, had each to be maintained in a state befitting their office in the eyes of a world, as ready in the thirteenth century as in the twentieth to judge by appearances and offer its homage accordingly.

In addition to the ordinary expenses of a ruler, whose court was a centre of religious and intellectual life for Europe, there was the constant burden of war, first with neighbouring Italian rulers and then with the Empire. Innocent IV triumphed over the Hohenstaufen; but largely by dipping his hands into English money-bags, to such an extent indeed during the reign of John's son, Henry III, that England gained the scoffing name of the 'milch cow of the Papacy'.

At first, when the ecclesiastical courts had offered to criminals a justice at once more humane and comprehensive than the rough-and-ready tyranny of a king or feudal lord, the upholders of the rights of Canon law were regarded as popular heroes. Later, however, with the growth of national feeling and the development and better administration of the civil codes, men and women began to falter in their allegiance. Canon law was found to be both expensive and tardy, especially in the case of 'appeals', that is, of cases called from some inferior court to Rome. The key also to the judgements given at Rome was often too obviously gold and of heavy weight.

Nor was justice alone to be bought or sold. A large part of the money that filled the Roman treasury was derived from benefices and livings in different countries of Europe that had by one means or another accumulated in papal hands. The constant pressure of the wars with emperors and Italian Ghibellines made it necessary for the Popes to administer this patronage as profitably as possible; and so the spiritual needs of dioceses and parishes became sacrificed to the military calls on the Roman treasury.

Sometimes it was not a living itself for which a clerical candidate

paid heavily, but merely the promise of 'preferment' to the next vacancy; or he would pledge himself in the case of nomination to send his 'firstfruits', that is, his first year's revenue, to Rome. Those who could afford the requisite sum might be natives of the country in which the vacant bishopric or living occurred: often they were not, and the successful nominee, instead of going in person to exercise his duties, would merely send an agent to collect his dues. These dues came from many different sources, but in the case of livings principally from the 'tithe', a tax for the maintenance of the Church, supposed to represent one-tenth of every man's income.

People usually grumble when they are continually asked for money, and mediaeval men and women were no exception to this rule. Thus, to take the case of England, while the wars between Emperor and Pope left her comparatively indifferent as to the issues involved, the growing exactions of the Roman *curia* that touched her pockets awoke a smouldering resentment that every now and then flared into hostility

'In these times', wrote the chronicler, Matthew Paris, 'the small fire of faith began to grow exceeding chill, so that it was well nigh reduced to ashes . . . for now was simony practised without shame. . . . Every day illiterate persons of the lowest class, armed with bulls from Rome, feared not to plunder the revenues which our pious forefathers had assigned for the maintenance of the Religious, the support of the poor, and the sustaining of strangers.'

At Oxford in the reign of Henry III (1216–72), the papal legate was forced to fly from the town by indignant 'clerks' of the university, or undergraduates as we should call them to-day. 'Where is that usurer, that simoniac, that plunderer of revenues, that thirster for money?' they cried, as they hunted him and his retinue through the streets, 'it is he who perverts the King and subverts the kingdom to enrich foreigners with our spoils.'

At Lincoln Bishop Grosstete indignantly refused to invest Innocent IV's nephew, a boy of twelve, with the next vacant prebendary of his cathedral. Other papal relatives were absorbing livings and bishoprics elsewhere in Europe, for under Innocent IV began the open practice of 'nepotism', that is, of

Popes using their revenues and their office in order to provide for their nephews and other members of their families.

'He laid aside all shame,' says Matthew Paris of this Pope, 'he extorted larger sums of money than any before him.' The 'sums of money' enabled Rome to cast down her imperial foe, but the extortion was a dangerous expedient. Throughout the early Middle Ages the Pope had been accepted by Western Christendom as speaking for the Church with the voice of Christ's authority. In his disputes with kings the latter could never be sure of the loyalty of their people, should they call on them to take up arms against the 'Holy Father'.

With the growth of nations and of Rome as a temporal power a gradual change came over the European outlook; subjects were more inclined to obey rulers whom they knew than a distant potentate whom they did not; they were also less ready to accept papal interference without criticism. Thus a distinction was for the first time drawn between the Pope and the Church.

When King Hako of Norway was offered the imperial crown on the deposition of Frederick II by Innocent IV, he refused, saying, 'I will gladly fight the enemies of the Church, but I will not fight against the foes of the Pope.' His words were significant of a new spirit. In the feuds of Guelfs and Ghibellines that racked the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were laid the foundations of a movement to control the Popes by Universal Councils in the fifteenth, and of that still more drastic opposition to his powers in the sixteenth that we call the Reformation.

XVI

THE FAITH OF THE MIDDLE AGES

A MODERN student, when he passes from school to a university, soon finds that he is standing at a cross-roads: he cannot hope, like a philosopher of the sixteenth century, to 'take all knowledge for his province', but must choose which of the many signposts he will follow—law, classics, science, economics, chemistry, medicine, to name but a few of the more important. Mediaeval minds would have been sorely puzzled by some of these avenues of knowledge, while the rest they would denounce as mere sidetracks, leading by a devious route to the main high road of theology. Science, for instance, the patient searching after truth by building up knowledge from facts, and accepting nothing as a fact that had not been verified by proof, was a closed book in the thirteenth century.

Roger Bacon, an English friar, one of the first to attempt scientific experiments, was regarded with such suspicion on account of his researches and his sarcastic comments on the views of his day that he was believed to be in league with the devil; and even the favour of a pope more enlightened than most of his contemporaries could not save him in later years from imprisonment as a suspected magician.

Men and women hate to change the ideas in which they have been brought up; and in the thirteenth century they readily accepted as facts such fabulous stories told by early Christian writers as that of the phoenix who at five hundred years old casts herself into a sacred fire, emerging renewed in health and vigour from her own ashes, or of the pelican killing her young at birth and reviving them in three days, or of the unicorn resisting all the wiles of the hunter but captured easily by a pure maiden. The charm of such natural history lay to mediaeval

minds not in its legendary quaintness but in the use to which it could be turned in pointing a moral or adorning the doctrines of theology.

Theology was the chief course of study at Paris, just as Roman law reigned at Bologna. It comprised a thorough mastery of the Scriptures as expounded by 'Fathers of the Church', and also of what was then known through Latin and Arabic translations of the works of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Although he had been a pagan, Aristotle was almost as much revered by many mediaeval theologians as St. Jerome or St. Augustine, and it was their life-work to try and reconcile his views with those of Catholic Christianity.

The philosophy that resulted from the study of these very different authorities is called 'scholasticism', and those who gave patient years of thought to the arguments that built up and maintained its theories the 'schoolmen'.

The first of the great Paris theologians was Peter Abelard, a Breton—handsome, self-confident, ready of tongue and brain. Having studied 'dialectics', that is, the system of reasoning by which the mediaeval mind constructed its philosophy, he aroused the disgust of his masters by drawing away their pupils, through his eloquence and originality, as soon as he understood the subject-matter sufficiently to lecture on his own account.

In Paris so many young men of his day crowded round his desk that Abelard has been sometimes called the founder of the university. This is not true, but his popularity may be said to have decided that Paris rather than any other town should become the intellectual centre of France. Greedily his audience listened while he endeavoured to prove by human reason beliefs that the Church taught as a matter of faith; and, though he had set out with the intention of defending her, it was with the Church that he soon came into conflict.

One of his books, called *Yes and No*, contained a brief summary of the views of early Christian Fathers on various theological questions. Drawn into such close proximity some of these views were found to conflict, and the Breton lecturer became an object of suspicion in ecclesiastical quarters, especially

to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who believed that human reason was given to man merely that he might accept the teaching of the Church, not to raise arguments or criticisms concerning it.

'Peter Abelard', he wrote to the Pope, 'is trying to make void the merit of Christian faith when he deems himself able by human reason to comprehend God altogether . . . the man is great in his own eyes . . . this scrutinizer of Majesty and fabricator of heresies.'

The minds of the two men were indeed utterly opposed—types of conflicting human thought in all ages. St. Bernard, in spite of his frank denunciations of the sins of the Church, was docile to the voice of her authority, and hated and feared the pride of the human intellect as the deadliest of all sins. Abelard, by nature inquisitive and sceptical, regarded his deft brain as a surgeon's knife, given him to cut away diseased or worn-out tissues from the thought of his day in order to leave it healthier and purer.

As antagonists they were no match, for St. Bernard was infinitely the greater man, without any of the other's petty vanity and worldliness to confuse the issue for which they struggled: he had behind him also the sympathy of mediaeval minds not as yet awakened to any spirit of inquiry, and so the Breton was driven into the retirement of a monk's cell and his condemned works publicly burned.

One of his pupils, Peter Lombard, adopted his master's methods without arousing the anger of the orthodox by any daring feats of controversy, and produced a *Book of Sentences* (*sententiae* = opinions) that became the text-book for scholasticism, just as the *Decretum* was the authority for students of Roman law. Without being a work of genius the *Sentences* cleared a pathway through the jungle of mediaeval thought for more original minds, while the discovery in the latter half of the twelfth century of several hitherto unknown works of Aristotle gave added zest to the researches of the 'Schoolmen'. Greatest of all these 'Schoolmen' was Thomas Aquinas, 'the Angelic Doctor', as he has sometimes been called.

Aquinas was a Neapolitan of noble family, who ran away

from home as a boy to join the Dominicans, an Order of wandering preachers of whose foundation we shall shortly speak. Thomas was recaptured and brought home by his elder brother, a noble at the court of Frederick II; but neither threats nor imprisonment could persuade the young novice to give up the life he had chosen. After a year he broke the bars of his window, escaped from Naples, and went to Cologne and Paris, where he studied theology, emerging from this education the greatest lecturer and teacher of his day. In his *Summa Theologiae*, his best-known book, he set forth his belief in man's highest good as the chief thought of God, using both the commentaries of the Church Fathers and the works of Aristotle as quarries to provide the material for fashioning his arguments. Like Abelard, he believed in the voice of reason, but without any of the Breton's probing scepticism. Human reason bridled by divine grace was the guide he sought to lead his pen through the maze of theology; and so clear and judicial were his methods, so brilliant the intellect that shone through his writings, that Aquinas became for later generations an authority almost equal to St. Augustine.

The intense preoccupation of mediaeval minds with theology and the importance attached to 'right belief' are the most striking mental characteristics of the period with which we are dealing. To-day we are inclined to judge a man by his actions rather than by his beliefs, to sum up a character as good or bad because its owner is generous or selfish, kind or cruel, brave or cowardly. In the twelfth or thirteenth centuries this would have seemed a wholly false standard. The ideal of conduct, for one thing, maintained by monks like St. Bernard of Clairvaux was so exalted that, to the ordinary men and women in an age of cruelty and fierce passions, a good life seemed impossible save for Saints. The sins and failings of the rest of the world received a very easy pardon except from ascetics; and it was generally felt that God in His mercy, through the intercession of the kindly Saints, would be compassionate to human weakness so long as the sinner repented, confessed, and clung to a belief in the teaching of the Church. This teaching, or 'Faith',

declared to have been given by Christ to His Apostles, set forth in the writings of the Christian Fathers, gathered together in the Creeds and Sacraments defined by Church Councils, preached and expounded by the clergy and theologians, defended by the Pope, was the torch that could alone guide man's wavering footsteps to the 'City of God'.

'Do you know what I shall gain,' asked a French Count of the thirteenth century, 'in that during this mortal life I have believed as Holy Church teaches? I shall have a crown in the Heavens above the angels, for the angels cannot but believe inasmuch as they see God face to face.'

Heresy—the refusal to accept the teaching of the Church—was the one unpardonable sin, a moral leprosy worse in mediaeval eyes than any human disease because it affected the soul, not the body, and the life of the soul was everlasting. The heretic must be suppressed, converted if possible, but if not, burned and forgotten like a diseased rag, lest his wrong beliefs should infect others and so lose their souls also eternally. To-day we know that neither suppression nor burnings can ultimately extinguish that independence of thought and spirit of inquiry that are as much the motive power of some human natures as the acceptance of authority is of others. Tolerance, and how far it can be extended to actions as well as beliefs, is one of the problems that the world is still studying. The towns and provinces, where the first battles were fought, are sown with the blood and ashes of those who neither sought nor offered the way of compromise as a solution.

Another of Abelard's pupils, besides the orthodox Peter Lombard, was an Italian, Arnold of Brescia—in many ways a man of like intellect with his master, self-centred, restless, and ambitious. When he returned home from the University he at once took a violent part in the life of the Brescian commune, declaring publicly that the Church should return to the days of 'apostolic poverty', and urging the citizens to cast off the yoke of their bishop. Exiled from Italy by the anger of the Pope and clergy at his views he went again to Paris, where he taught in the University until by the King's command he was driven

away. He next found a refuge in Germany under the protection of a papal legate, who had known and admired him in earlier days; but this news aroused the furious anger of St. Bernard.

'Arnold of Brescia,' he wrote to the legate, 'whose speech is honey . . . whose doctrine poison, the man whom Brescia has vomited forth, whom Rome abhors, whom France drives into exile, whom Germany curses, whom Italy refuses to receive, obtains thy support. To be his friend is to be the foe of the Pope and God.'

The legate contrived by mediation to reconcile the heretic temporarily with the Church; but Arnold was by nature a firebrand, and, having settled in Rome, soon became leader in one of the many plots to make that city a 'Free Town', owing allegiance only to the Emperor. Largely through his efforts the Pope was compelled to go into exile; but later the Romans, under the fear of an interdict that would deprive them of the visits of pilgrims out of whom they usually made their living, deserted him; and the republican leader was forced to fly. Captured amongst the Italian hills, he was taken to Rome and burned, his ashes being thrown into the Tiber lest they should be claimed as relics by those of the populace who still loved him. His judges need not have taken this precaution, for neither Arnold's religious nor political views could claim any large measure of public approval in his own day. Elsewhere, indeed, heresy and rebellion were seething, but it was not till the beginning of the thirteenth century that the outbreak became a vital problem for the Papacy.

The widest area of heresy was in the provinces of Languedoc and Provence, to whose precocious mental development we have already referred.[1] The Counts of Toulouse no longer ruled in the thirteenth century over any of modern Spain, but north of the Pyrenees they were tenants-in-chief to the French king for one of the most fertile provinces of southern France, while as Marquesses of Provence they were vassals of the Emperor for the country beyond the Rhone.

Semi-independent of the control of either of these overlords,

[1] See p. 199.

Count Raymond VI presided over a court famed for its luxury and gaiety of heart, its light morals, and unorthodox religious views. When he received complaints from Rome that his people were deriding the Catholic Faith and stoning his bishops and priests, he scarcely pretended regret, for his sceptical nature was quite unshocked by heresy, and both he and his nobles fully approved of popular insistence on 'apostolic poverty', a doctrine that enabled them to appropriate ecclesiastical lands and revenues for their own purposes.

The heretical sects in Languedoc were many: perhaps the most important those of the Albigenses and Waldensians. The former practically denied Christianity, maintaining that good and evil were co-equal powers, and that Christ's death was of no avail to save mankind. The Waldensians, or 'Poor men of Lyons', on the other hand, had at first tried to find acceptance for their beliefs within the Church. Peter Waldo, their founder, a rich merchant of Lyons, had translated some of the Gospels from Latin into the language of the countryside, and, having given away all his goods, he travelled from village to village, preaching, and trying with his followers to imitate the lives of the Apostles in simplicity and poverty.

In spite of condemnation from the Pope, who was suspicious of their teaching, the Waldensians increased in number. They declared that the authority of the Bible was superior to that of the Church, appointed ministers of their own, and denied many of the principal articles of Faith that the Church insisted were necessary to salvation.

The mediaeval Church taught that only through belief in these articles of Faith, that is, in the Creeds and Sacraments (*sacramentum* = something sacred), as administered by the clergy, could man hope to be saved. The most important of the Sacraments, of which there were seven, was the miracle of the Mass, sometimes called 'transubstantiation'. Its origin was the Last Supper, when Christ before His crucifixion gave His disciples bread and wine, saying 'Take, eat, this is my body. . . .' 'Take, drink, this is my blood which was shed for you.' The mediaeval Church declared that every time at the service of

Mass the priest offered up 'the Host', or consecrated bread, Christ was sacrificed anew for the sins of the world, and that the bread became in truth converted into the substance of His body.

The Waldensians, and many sects that later broke away from the tenets of the mediaeval Church, denied this miracle and also the sacred character of the priests who could perform it. According to the Church, her clergy at ordination received through the laying on of the bishop's hands some of the mysterious power that Christ had given to St. Peter, conferring on them the power also to forgive sins. No matter if the priest became idle or vicious, he still by virtue of his ordination retained his sacred character, and to lay hands upon him was to incur the wrath of God.

Even in the twelfth century, when St. Bernard travelled in Languedoc, he had been horrified to find 'the sacraments no longer sacred and priests without respect'. His attempts at remonstrance were met with stones and threats, while the establishment of an 'episcopal inquisition' to inquire into and stamp out this hostility only increased Provençal bitterness and determination.

'I would rather be a Jew,' was an expression of disdain in the Middle Ages; but in Toulouse the people said, 'I had rather be a priest,' and the clergy who walked abroad were forced to conceal their tonsures for fear of assault.

'Heresy can only be destroyed by solid instruction' was Innocent III's first verdict. 'It is by preaching the truth that we sap foundations of error.' He therefore sent some Cistercians to hold a mission in Languedoc, and in their company travelled a young Spaniard, Dominic de Guzman, burning to win souls for the Faith or suffer martyrdom. The Cistercians rode on horses with a large train of servants and with wagons drawn by oxen to carry their clothes and their food. This display aroused the scornful mirth of the Albigenses and Waldensians. 'See,' they cried, 'the wealthy missionaries of a God who was humble and despised, loaded with honours!'

Everywhere were the same ridicule and contempt, and it was in

this moment of failure that Dominic the Spaniard interposed, speaking earnestly to those who were with him of the contrast between the heretic ministers in their lives of poverty and self-denial with the luxury and worldliness of the local clergy, and even with the ostentatious parade of his fellow preachers. Because he had long practised austerities himself, wearing a hair shirt, fasting often, and denying himself every pleasure, the young Spaniard received a respectful hearing, and so fired the Cistercians with his enthusiasm that they sent away their horses and baggage-wagons, and set out on foot through the country to try and win the populace by different methods. With them went Dominic, barefoot, exulting in this opportunity of bearing witness in the face of danger to the Faith he held so precious.

The attitude of the men and women of Languedoc towards the papal mission was no longer derisive but it remained hostile, for they also held their Faith sacred, while all the racial prejudice of the countryside was thrown into the balance of opposition to Rome. Thus converts were few, and angry gatherings at which stones were thrown at the strangers many; and so matters drifted on and the mission grew more and more discouraged.

In 1208 occurred a violent crisis, for the papal legate, having excommunicated Count Raymond of Toulouse for appropriating certain Church lands and refusing to restore them, was murdered, and the Count himself implicated in the crime, seeing that, as in the case of Henry II and Becket, it had been his angry curses that had prompted some knights to do the deed. Innocent III at once declared the Count deposed, and preached a crusade against him and his subjects as heretics.

Twenty years of bloodshed and cruelty followed; for under the command of the French Count Simon de Montfort, an utterly unscrupulous and brutal general, the orthodox legions of northern France gathered at the papal summons to stamp out the independence of the south that they had always hated as a rival. Languedoc, her nobles and people united, fought hard for her religious and political freedom; but the struggle was uneven, and she was finally forced into submission. Thirty

thousand of her sons and daughters had perished, and with them the civilization and culture that had made the name of Provence glorious in mediaeval Europe.

The name of Dominic the Spaniard does not appear in the bloodstained annals of the Albigensian Crusade. He had advocated very different measures; and in 1216, pursuing his ideal, received from the Pope leave to form an Order of 'Preaching Brothers', modelled on the Monastic Orders, except that the 'Friars' (*Fratres* = brothers), as these monks were called, were commanded not to live permanently in communities but to spend their lives travelling about from village to village, preaching as they went. They were to beg their daily bread; and the very Order itself was forbidden to acquire wealth, their founder hoping by this stringent rule to prevent the worldliness that had corrupted the other religious communities.

Dominic, or St. Dominic, for the enthusiasm of the mediaeval Church soon canonized him, was a son of his age in his intense devotion to the Faith; but his spiritual outlook was beyond the comprehension of all save a few. In Innocent III may be found a more typical figure of the early thirteenth century; and to Innocent's standard, and not to that of their founder, the followers of St. Dominic for the most part conformed.

Pope Innocent had advocated the driving out of error by right teaching; but his failure by this method woke in him an exasperation that made the obstinate heresy of Languedoc seem a moral and social plague to be suppressed ruthlessly. Thorough in this undertaking as in all to which he set his mind and hand, he added to the slaughter of Simon de Montfort's Crusade the terrible and efficient machinery of the Inquisition, and this during the pontificate of Gregory IX was transferred from the jurisdiction of local bishops to that of the Papal See. The Inquisitors, empowered to discover heresy, and convert the heretic by torture and fire, were mainly Dominicans, selected for this task on account of their theological training and the very devotion to the Faith on which their founder had laid such stress.

The most important political fruits of the Albigensian Crusade

were gathered by Philip II of France, who had himself stood aloof from the struggle, although permitting and encouraging his nobles to take the Cross. By the deposition and fall of his powerful tenant-in-chief, the Count of Toulouse, the centre and south of France, hitherto so proudly independent, lost a formidable ally; and large tracts of Poitou and Aquitaine fell under royal influence and were incorporated amongst the crown lands.

This process continued under Philip's son, Louis VIII, who himself joined in the Crusade and marched with an army down the valley of the Rhone, capturing Avignon, and arriving almost at the gates of Toulouse. His sudden illness and death brought the campaign to an end; but his widow, Blanche of Castile, acting as regent for her son the boy King Louis IX, concluded a treaty with the new Count of Toulouse, Raymond VII, that left that noble a chastened and submissive vassal of both king and pope. Amongst other things he was forced to acknowledge one of the French king's younger brothers as his successor in the County of Provence.

It is pleasant to turn from the Albigensian Crusade, one of the blackest pictures of the Middle Ages, to its best and brightest, the story of St. Francis of Assisi.

In 1182 there was born at Assisi, a little Umbrian village, a boy whom his mother named John, but whom his father, a rich merchant, who had lately travelled in France, nicknamed 'Francis', or 'the Frenchman'. St. Dominic had developed his fiery faith in an austere and intensely religious home; but Francis shared the light-hearted sociable intercourse of an Italian town, and in boyhood was distinguished only from his fellows by his generosity, innate purity, and irrepressible joy in life.

When he grew up, Francis went to fight with the forces of Assisi against the neighbouring city of Perugia, and was taken prisoner with some others of his fellow townsmen and thrown into a dungeon. The grumbling and bitterness of the majority during that twelve months of captivity were very natural; but Francis, unlike the rest, met the general discomfort with serene good-

humour, even merriment, so that not for the last time in his career he was denounced as crazy.

On his release and return home, the merchant Bernadone wished his son to cut some figure in the world; and when the young man dreamed of shining armour and military glory, he provided him with all he had asked in the way of clothes and accoutrements and sent him in the train of a wealthy noble who was going to fight in Naples.

Half-way on his journey Francis turned back to Assisi. God, he believed, had told him to do so—why he could not tell. He tried to follow the frivolous life he had led before, but now the laughter of his companions seemed to ring hollow in his ears. It was as if they found pleasure in a shadow, while he alone was conscious that somewhere close was a reality of joy that, if he could only discover it, would illumine the whole world.

Then his call came; but to the comfortable citizens of Assisi it seemed the voice of madness. The young Bernadone, it was rumoured, had been seen in the company of lepers and entertaining beggars at his table. Almost all the money and goods he possessed he had given away; nay, there came a final word that he had sold his horse and left his home to live in a cave outside the town. The people shook their heads at such folly and sympathized with the old Bernadone at this end to his fine ambitions for his son.

Pietro Bernadone in truth had developed such a furious anger that he appealed to the Bishop of Assisi, entreating him either to persuade Francis to give up his new way of life or else to compel him to surrender the few belongings he had still left. Francis was then summoned, and in the bishop's presence handed back to his father his purse and even his very clothes. Penniless he stood before Assisi who had often ridden through the streets a rich man's heir, and it was a beggar's grey robe with a white cross roughly chalked upon it that he adopted as the uniform of his new career.

His fellow townsmen had been moved by this complete renunciation; but mingled at first with their admiration was a half-scornful incredulity. They could understand saints ardent

in defence of the Faith against heresy, fiery in their denunciation of all worldly pleasures, for such belonged to the religious atmosphere of the Middle Ages; but this son of Assisi, who raised no banner in controversy, and found an equal joy of life in the sunshine on a hill-side, in the warmth of a fire, in the squalor of a slum, was at first beyond their spiritual vision.

Yet Francis Bernadone belonged as truly to the mediaeval world as St. Dominic or St. Bernard of Clairvaux. In his spirit was mingled the self-denial of the 'Poor Men of Lyons' and the romance of the Provençal singers. These troubadours sang of knights whose glory and boast were the life-service of some incomparable lady. Francis exulted in his servitude to 'My Lady Poverty', his soul aflame with a chivalry in contrast to which the conventional devotion of poets burned dim.

In honour of 'My Lady Poverty' the rich merchant's son had cast away his father's affection, his military ambitions, his comfortable home and gay clothes; and because of the strength and depth of his devotion the surrender left no bitterness, only an intense joy that found beauty amid the rags, disease, and filth of the most sordid surroundings.

For some time it never occurred to Francis to found an Order from amongst the men who, irresistibly drawn by his sincerity and joy, wished to become his followers and share his privations and work amongst the poor and sick. When they asked him for a 'rule of life', such as that possessed by the monastic foundations, he led them to the nearest church. In the words of a chronicler:

'Commencing to pray (because they were simple men and did not know where to find the Gospel text relating to the renouncing of the world), they asked the Lord devoutly that He would deign to show them His will at the first opening of the Book.

'When they had prayed, the blessed Francis, taking in his hands the closed Book, kneeling before the Altar opened it, and his eye fell first upon the precept of the Lord, "If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven": at which the blessed Francis was very glad and gave thanks to God.'

Thus, in dedication to the service of 'My Lady Poverty', the

Order of the 'Lesser Brethren' (Minorites), or the 'Poor Men of Assisi', was founded and received permission from Innocent III to carry on its work amongst lepers and outcasts, though it was not till 1223 that formal sanction for an Order was received from Rome.

Three years later St. Francis died, and the Friars who had lived with him declared that he had followed Christ so closely that in his hands and feet were found the 'stigmata' or marks of the wounds his Master had endured in the agony of crucifixion. Tales have been handed down of his humility and gentleness, of how, in the early days of the Order, he would go himself and beg the daily bread for his small community rather than send his companions to encounter possible insults; of how, in an age that set little store even by human lives, he would rescue doves in their cages that lads carried about for sale, and set them free; and of how, because he read something of God's soul in every creature that had life, he preached to the birds as well as to men.

Brotherhood to the friar of Assisi meant the union not only of all human souls but of all creation in the praise of God, and daily he offered thanks for the help of his brothers, the sun, the fire, and the wind; and for his sisters, the moon and the water; and for his mother, the earth. It was his love of nature, most strange to the thirteenth century, that is one of the strongest bonds between St. Francis and the men and women of to-day.

'He told the brother who made the garden', says his chronicler, 'not to devote all of it to vegetables, but to have some part for flowering plants, which in their season produce "brother flowers" for love of Him who is called "Flower of the Field" and "Lily of the Valley". He said, indeed, that Brother Gardener always ought to make a beautiful patch in some part of the garden and plant it with all sorts of sweet-smelling herbs, and herbs that produce beautiful flowers, so that in their season they may invite men, seeing them, to praise the Lord. For every creature cries aloud, "God made me for thy sake, O Man!"'

Once the true beauty of St. Francis's life was recognized, his followers increased rapidly and no longer had to fear insult or injury when they begged. Crowds, indeed, collected to hear

them preach and to bring them offerings. Some Franciscans settled in France and Germany, and others went to England during the reign of Henry III and lived amid the slums of London, Oxford, and Norwich, wherever it seemed to them that they could best serve 'Lady Poverty'.

St. Francis himself before he died had been puzzled and almost alarmed by the popularity he had never courted, and he confessed sadly that, instead of living the lives of Saints, some of those who professed to follow him were 'fain to receive praise and honour by rehearsing and preaching the works that the Saints did themselves achieve'.

He was right in his fear for the future. Rules are a dead letter without the spirit of understanding that gives them a true obedience; and the secret of his joyous and unassuming self-denial Francis could only bequeath to a few. Preaching, not for the sake of helping man and glorifying God, but in order to earn the wealth and esteem their founder had held as dross—this was the temptation to which the 'Grey Brethren' succumbed, even within the generation that had known St. Francis himself. Avarice and self-satisfaction, following their wide popularity, soon led the Franciscans into quarrels with the other religious Orders and with the lecturers of the Universities and the secular clergy. These looked upon the 'Mendicants' as interlopers, trying to thieve congregations, fees, and revenues to which they had no right.

'None of the Faithful', says a contemporary Benedictine sourly, 'believe they can be saved unless they are under the direction of the Preachers or Minorites.' The power of the Franciscans, as of the Dominicans, was encouraged by the majority of Popes, who, like Innocent III, recognized in their enthusiasm a new weapon with which to defend Rome from accusations of worldliness and corruption. In return for papal sympathy and support the Friars became Rome's most ardent champions, and in defence of a system rather than in devotion to an ideal of life they deteriorated and accepted the ordinary religious standard of their day.

Once more a wave of reform had swept into the mediaeval

Church in a cleansing flood, only to be lost in the ebb tide of reaction. Yet this ultimate failure did not mean that the force of the wave was spent in vain. St. Francis could not stem the corruption of the thirteenth century; but his simple sincerity could reveal again to mankind an almost-forgotten truth that the road to the love of God is the love of humanity.

'The Benedictine Order was the retreat from the World, the Franciscan the return to it.' These words show that the mediaeval mind, with its suspicion and dread of human nature, was undergoing transformation. Already it showed a gleam of that more modern spirit that traces something of the divine in every work of God, and therefore does not feel distrust but sympathy and interest.

To St. Augustine the way to the *Civitas Dei* had been a precipitous and narrow road for each human soul, encompassed by legions of evil in its struggle for salvation. To St. Francis it was a pathway, steep indeed and rough, but bright with flowers, and so lit by the joy of serving others that the pilgrim scarce realized his feet were bleeding from the stones.

In the dungeons of Perugia the mirth of Francis Bernadone had been called by his companions 'craziness', and to those whose eyes read evil rather than good in this world his message still borders on madness. Yet the Saint of Assisi has had his followers in all ages since his death, distinguished not necessarily by the Grey Friar's robe, but by their silent spending of themselves for others and their joyous belief in God and man.

Supplementary Dates. For Chronological Summary, see pp. 368–73.

Roger Bacon	1214–92
Peter Abelard	1079–1142
Thomas Aquinas	1227–74
Arnold of Brescia (burned)	1155
St. Dominic	1170–1221
The Albigensian Crusade	1209
Louis VIII of France	1223–6
St. Francis of Assisi	1182–1226
Foundation of Franciscan Order	1223

XVII

FRANCE UNDER TWO STRONG KINGS

We have seen that Philip Augustus laid the foundations of a strong French monarchy, but his death was followed by feudal reaction, the nobles struggling in every way by fraud or violence to recover the independence that they had lost.

Louis VIII, the new king, in order to checkmate their designs, determined to divide his lands amongst his sons, all the younger paying allegiance to the eldest, but each directly responsible for the administration of his own province. Perhaps at the time this was the most obvious means of ruling in the interests of the crown a kingdom that, in its rapid absorption of Normandy, Anjou, Poitou, and Toulouse, had outrun the central government. Yet it was in truth a short-sighted policy for, since these 'appanages', or royal fiefs, were hereditary, they ended by replacing the old feudal nobility with a new, the more arrogant in its ambitions because it could claim kinship with the House of Capet.

Louis VIII did not live long enough to put his plan into execution; and Louis IX, a boy of twelve at the time of his accession, though accepting later the provision made for his younger brothers in his father's will, was enabled, partly by the administrative ability of his mother and guardian, Queen Blanche, partly by his own personality, to maintain his supremacy undiminished. On one occasion his brother, the Count of Anjou, had imprisoned a knight, in anger that the man should have dared to appeal to the king's court against a judicial decision he himself had given. 'I will have but one king in France,' exclaimed Louis when he heard, and ordered the knight to be released and that both he and the count should bring their case to Paris for royal judgement.

Heavy penalties were also inflicted by Louis on any promoters

of private warfare, while the baronage was restricted in its right to coin money. At this time eighty nobles besides the King are said to have possessed their own mints. Louis, who knew the feudal coinage was freely debased, forbade its circulation except in the province where it had been minted; while his own money, which was of far higher value, was made current everywhere. Men and women naturally prefer good coins to bad in exchange for merchandise; and so the King hoped that the debased money, when restricted in use, would gradually be driven out of existence.

If Louis believed in his rights as an absolute king, he had an equally high conception of the duties that such rights involved. 'Make thyself beloved by thy people,' he said to his son, 'for I would rather that a Scotchman came from Scotland and governed my subjects well and equitably than that thou shouldst govern them badly.'

Royal justice, like the coinage, must be superior to any other justice; and so the chroniclers tell us that Louis selected as his bailiffs and seneschals those who were 'loyal and wise, of upright conduct and good reputation, above all, men with clean hands'. Knowing the ease with which even well-meaning officials could be corrupted by money and honours, he ordered his deputies neither to receive nor give presents, while he warned his judges always to lean rather to the side of the poor than of the rich in a case of law until evidence revealed the truth.

Philip Augustus had followed justice because he believed that it paid, and his subjects had feared and respected him. His grandson, with his keen sense of honour, shrank from injustice as something unclean; and we are told that the people 'loved him as men love God and the Saints'.

Like nearly all the kings of France, Louis was a devout son of the Church, and it was under his protection that Innocent IV resided safely at Lyons when Frederick II had driven him from Rome.[1] Nevertheless the King's sincere love of the Faith, that later won him canonization as a Saint, never hindered his determination that he would be master of all his subjects,

[1] See p. 194.

both lay and ecclesiastical. If the clergy sinned after the manner of laymen he was firm that they should be tried in the lay courts; and while his contemporary, Henry III of England, remained a feeble victim of papal encroachments, Louis boldly declared, 'It is unheard of that the Holy See, when it is in need, should impose subsidies on the Church of France, and levy those contributions on temporal goods that can only be imposed by the King.'

No storm of protest was aroused, for the Papacy in its bitter struggle with the Empire was largly dependent on French support; while Louis's transparent purity of motive in maintaining his supremacy disarmed indignation. An Italian friar, who saw him humbly sharing the meal of some Franciscan brethren, described him as 'more monk than king'. This assumption was at first sight borne out by his daily life: his simple diet and love of sombre clothes; his habit of rising from his bed at midnight and in the early mornings to share in the services of the Church; his hatred of oaths, lying, and idle gossip; his almost reckless charity; the eager help he offered in nursing the sick amongst his Paris slums and in washing the feet of the most repulsive beggars who crowded at his gate. 'He was frail and slender,' says the same Italian, 'with an angelic expression, and dove's eyes full of grace.'

Perhaps, if Louis had not been called to the life of a king, he might have become a friar; but living in the world he loved his wife and children, and would sometimes tease the former by protesting, when she complained how poorly he dressed, that if he put on gaudy clothes to please her she also must go in drab attire to please him.

Those of his subjects who saw Louis on the battle-field describe him as 'the finest knight ever seen', and recount tales of their difficulty in restraining his hot courage, that would carry him into the fiercest hand-to-hand conflict without any thought of personal danger. Yet this king was a lover of peace in his heart. He wished to be friends with all his Christian neighbours, and, well content with the lands that already belonged to the French crown, he negotiated a treaty by which he recognized English claims to the Duchy of Guienne. Less

successful was his effort to act as mediator between popes and emperors; but if he could not secure peace he determined at least to remain as neutral in the struggle as possible, refusing the imperial crown when the Pope deposed Frederick II. Nor would he reap advantage out of the anarchy that followed on that emperor's death.

War between Christians was hateful to Louis because it prevented any combined action against the Turks; for in him, as in Innocent III, burned the old crusading spirit that had never quite died out in France.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century a French peasant lad, Stephen, had preached a new crusade, saying that God had told him in a vision that it was left for Christian children to succeed where their elders had failed in recovering the Holy Sepulchre. Thousands of boys and girls, some of them only twelve or thirteen years of age, collected at Marseilles in eager response to this message. They expected that a pathway would be opened to them across the sea as in the days of Moses and the Chosen People, and when they had waited for some time in vain for this miracle, they allowed themselves to be entrapped by false merchants, who, though Christian in name, would allow nothing to stand in the way of the gold that they coveted. Enticed on board ship, disarmed, bound, and manacled, the unfortunate young crusaders were sold in the market-places of Egypt and Syria to become the slaves of the Moslems whom they had hoped to conquer.

When he had first heard of the Children's Crusade, Innocent III had exclaimed, 'The children shame us indeed!' and St. Louis, the inheritor of their spirit, felt that his kingship would be shamed unless he used his power and influence to convert and overthrow the Turk.

One of his subjects, who loved him, the Sieur de Joinville, has left a graphic personal account of the expedition undertaken against Egypt. From Cyprus, the head-quarters of the crusaders, a fleet of some one thousand eight hundred vessels, great and small, sailed to Damietta, at the mouth of the Nile; and Louis, seeing his ensign borne ashore, would not be restrained, but

leaped himself into the water, lance in hand, shouting his battle-cry of 'Mont-joie St. Denys!'

Before the impetuosity of an army inspired by this zeal the town soon fell; but the mediaeval mind had reckoned little with difficulties of climate, and soon the unhealthy mists that hung over the delta of the Nile were decimating the Christian ranks with fever and dysentery, while many of the best troops perished in unimportant skirmishes into which daring rather than a wise judgement had led them. The advance once checked became a retreat, the retreat a rout; and St. Louis, refusing to desert his rear-guard, was taken prisoner by the Mahometans.

The disaster was complete, for only on the surrender of Damietta and the payment of a huge ransom was the King released, but his patience and chivalry redeemed his failure from all stain of ignominy. Instead of returning to France he sailed to the Holy Land; where, though Jerusalem had again fallen to the Turks after Frederick II's temporary possession of it, yet a strip of seaboard, including the port of Acre, remained to the Christians.

Louis believed that, unless he persevered in fulfilling his vow, crusaders of a lesser rank would lose their hope and courage, and so, enfeebled by disease, he stayed for three years in Palestine, until the death of his mother, Queen Blanche, whom he had left as regent in France, compelled him to return home. Joinville relates how on this voyage, because of the fierceness of the storm, the sailors would have put the King ashore at Cyprus, but Louis feared a panic amongst the terrified troops if he agreed. 'There is none', he said, 'that does not love his life as much as I love mine, and these peradventure would never return to their own land. Therefore I like better to place my own person . . . in God's hands than to do this harm to the many people who are here.'

Louis reached France in safety, but, chafing at his crusading failures, he once more took the Cross, against the advice of his barons, in 1270. It was his aim to regain Tunis, and so to free part of North Africa at least from Mahometan rule. To this task he brought his old religious enthusiasm, but France was weary of

crusades, and many of those who had fought willingly in Syria and Egypt now refused to follow him, leaving the greater part of his army to be composed of mercenaries, tempted only by their pay.

Landing near Carthage, the crusaders soon found themselves outnumbered, and were blockaded by their foes amid the ruins of the town. Pestilence swept the crowded, insanitary camp, and one of the first to fall a victim was the delicate king. 'Lord, have pity on Thy people whom I have led here. Send them to their homes in safety. Let them not fall into the hands of their enemies, nor let them be forced to deny Thy Holy Name.'

The dying words of the saint are characteristic of his love of the Faith and of his people; and everywhere in the camp and in France, when the news of his death reached her, there was mourning for this king among kings who had sacrificed his life for his ideals. Yet the flame of enthusiasm he had tried to keep alight quickly flickered out into the darkness, and his son and successor, Philip III, made a truce with the Sultan of Tunis that enabled him to withdraw his army and embark for home. The only person really annoyed by this arrangement was the English prince Edward, afterwards Edward I, who arrived on the scene just at the time of St. Louis's death, thirsting for a campaign and military glory; but owing to the general indifference he was forced to give up the idea of war in Africa and continue his journey alone to the Holy Land.

Philip III of France has left little mark on history. He stands, with the title of 'the Rash', between two kings of dominant personality—his father, canonized as a saint before the century had closed, and his son Philip IV, 'the Fair', anything but a saint in his hard, unscrupulous dealings with the world, but yet one of the strongest rulers that France has known.

Philip IV was only seventeen when he became king. From his nickname 'le Bel' it is obvious that he was handsome, but no kindly Joinville has left a record of his personal life and character. We can only draw our conclusions from his acts, and these show him ruthless in his ambitions, mean, and vindictive.

In his dealings with the Papacy Philip's conduct stands con-

trasted with the usual affectionate reverence of his predecessors; but this contrast is partly accounted for by the fact that, at the end of the quarrel between Empire and Papacy, Rome found herself regarding France from a very changed standpoint to the early days of that encounter.

Ever since the time of Gregory VII the Hohenstaufen emperors had loomed like a thunder-cloud on the papal horizon, but with the execution of Conradin, the last of the royal line,[1] this threatening atmosphere had cleared. The Empire fell a prey to civil war during the Great Interregnum, that is, during the seventeen years when English, Spanish, and German princes contended without any decisive results for the imperial crown. Count Rudolf of Habsburg, who at last emerged triumphant, had learned at least one diplomatic lesson, that if he wished to have a free hand in Germany he could do so best as the friend of the Pope, not as his enemy. One of his earliest acts was to ratify a concordat with Rome in which he resigned all those imperial claims to the lands belonging to the Holy See that Frederick II had put forward. He also agreed to acknowledge Count Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis and the Pope's chief ally, as Count of Provence and King of Naples and Sicily.

Italy was thus freed from German intervention, but her cities remained torn by the factions of Guelfs and Ghibellines; and the iron hand of the French lay as heavily on 'The Kingdom' as ever the Hohenstaufen's despotic sceptre. The Sicilians, restless under the yoke, began to mourn Frederick, who, whatever his sins, had been born and bred in the south, the son of a southern princess; while these French were cruel with the indifferent ferocity of strangers who despised those whom they oppressed.

Out of the sullen hatred of the multitude, stirred of a sudden to white heat by the assault of a French soldier on a woman of Palermo, sprang the 'Sicilian Vespers', the rebellion and massacre of an Easter Monday night, when more than four thousand of the hated strangers, men, women, and children, were put to death and their bodies flung into an open pit.

[1] See p. 195.

Charles of Anjou prepared a fitting revenge for this insult to his race, a revenge that he intended to exact to the uttermost farthing, for he had little of his brother's sense of justice and tender heart; but while he made his preparations a Spanish prince, Peter III of Aragon, came to the rescue of the Sicilians with a large fleet. A fierce war followed, but in spite of defeats, treaties that would have sacrificed her to the interests of kings, and continuous papal threats, Sicily clung staunch to her new ally, gaining at last as a recognized Aragonese possession a triumphant independence of the Angevin kingdom of Naples.

Rome, under a pope who was merely the puppet of Charles of Anjou, had hurled anathemas at Peter III; but his successors of more independent mind envied the Sicilians. It was of little use for Rome to throw off Hohenstaufen chains if she must rivet in their stead those of the French House of Anjou. This was the fear that made her look with cold suspicion on her once well-beloved sons the kings of France, whose relations of the blood-royal were also kings of Naples.

In 1294 Pope Boniface VIII, sometimes called 'the last of the mediaeval Popes' because any hopes of realizing the world-wide ambitions of a Hildebrand or of an Innocent III died with him, was elected to the Chair of St. Peter. His jubilee, held at Rome in 1300 to celebrate the new century, was of a spendour to dazzle the thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Europe who poured their offerings into his coffers; but its glamour was delusive.

Already he had suffered rebuffs in encounters with the kings of England and France: for, when he published a Bull, *Clericis Laicos*, that forbade the clergy to pay taxes any longer to a lay ruler, Edward I at once condemned the English Church to outlawry, until from fear of the wholesale robbery of their lands and goods his bishops consented to a compromise that made the Bull a dead letter. Philip IV of France, on his part, was even more violent, for he retaliated by ordering his subjects to send no more contributions to Rome of any kind.

A wiser man than Boniface might have realized from his failures that the growth of nationality was proving too strong for

any theories of world-government, whether papal or imperial; but, old and stubborn, he could not set aside his Hildebrandine ideals. When one of his legates, a Frenchman, embarked on a dispute with Philip IV, Boniface told him to meet the King with open defiance, upon which Philip immediately ordered the ecclesiastic's arrest, and that his archbishop should degrade him from his office. Boniface then fulminated threats of excommunication and deposition, to which the French king replied by an act of open violence.

The agent he chose to inflict this insult was a certain Nogaret, grandson of an Albigensian heretic who had been burned at the stake, and this man joined himself to some of the nobles of the Roman Campagna, who had equally little reverence for the Head of Christendom. Heavily armed, they appeared in the village of Anagni, where Boniface VIII was staying, and demanded to see him. Outside in the street their men-at-arms stood shouting 'Death to the Pope!'

Boniface could hear them from his audience-chamber, but though he was eighty-six his courage did not fail him. Clad in his full pontifical robes, his cross in one hand, his keys of St. Peter in the other, he received the intruders. Nogaret roughly demanded his abdication. 'Here is my head! Here is my neck!' he replied. 'Betrayed like Jesus Christ, if I must die like Him I will at least die Pope.' At this one of the Roman nobles struck him across the face with his mailed glove, felling him to the ground, and would have killed him had not Nogaret interfered. It was the Provençal's mission to intimidate rather than to murder, and while he argued with the Italians a hostile crowd assembled to rescue their Vicar, and the French agents were forced to fly.

The proud old man survived the indignities he had suffered only by a few weeks, and his successor, having dared to excommunicate those who took part in the scene at Anagni, died also with mysterious suddenness. No definite suspicion attached to Philip IV, but rumour whispered the fatal word 'poison', and the conclave of cardinals spent ten uneasy months in trying to find a new pope. At last a choice emerged from the conclave,

the Archbishop of Bordeaux, with the title of Clement V. He was crowned at Lyons, and never ventured into Italy, choosing as his residence the city of Avignon in Provence.

Here for just over seventy years, during the 'Babylonish Captivity' as it was usually called, a succession of popes reigned under French influence, having exchanged the imperial yoke for one still more binding.

Philip IV at once made use of this French Head of Christendom to condemn the Order of Templars, which from their powerful organization and extensive revenues he had long regarded with dislike and envy.

The crusades at an end, the Templars had outlived the object of their foundation; while the self-denial imposed upon them and their roving, uncloistered life, exposed them to constant temptations to which many of the less spiritual succumbed. Thus their suppression was probably wise; but Philip IV, a pitiless enemy, did not merely suppress, he pursued the Knights of the Temple with vindictive cruelty. Hundreds were thrown into dungeons, and there tortured into confessing crimes, the committal of which they afterwards recanted in vain; while their principal officers were burned at the stake in the market-places of the large French towns. By papal commands the revenues of the Templars passed into the exchequer of the Knights of St. John, who still guarded one of the outposts of Christendom, the island of Rhodes; but the French king took care that a substantial part of the money confiscated in France went instead to his own treasury.

Philip was indeed in serious financial straits, for the revenues of the royal demesnes were proving quite inadequate to meet the expenses of a government that now extended its sway over the length and breadth of France. Philip tried many expedients to meet the deficiency, most of them bad. Such were the frequent debasement of the coinage and the imposition of the *gabelle*, that is of a tax on the sale of goods. This was justly hated because instead of encouraging commerce it penalized industry by adding to the price of nearly every commodity put on the market. Thus a *gabelle* imposed on grain would mean that a man must

pay a tax on it three times over, first in the form of grain, then of flour, and finally as bread.

Worse even than the *gabelle* was Philip's method of 'farming' the taxes, that is, of selling the right to collect them to some speculator, who would make himself responsible to the government for a round sum, and then squeeze what extra money he could out of the unfortunate populace in order to repay his efforts.

It is not, then, for any improved financial administration that the reign of Philip IV is worthy of praise. His was no original genius, but rather a practical ability for developing the schemes invented by his predecessors. Like them he hated and distrusted his insubordinate baronage; and, seeking to impose his fierce will upon them, turned for advice and obedience to men of lesser rank, employing as the main instrument of his government the lawyer class that Philip Augustus and Louis IX had introduced in limited numbers amongst the feudal office-holders at their court.

The employment of trained workers in the place of amateurs resulted in improved administration, so it followed that under Philip IV the French government began to take a definitely modern stamp and became divided into separate departments for considering different kinds of work. Thus it was the duty of the *Conseil du Roi*, or King's Council, to give the Sovereign advice; of the *Chambre des Comptes*, or Chamber of Finance, to deal with financial questions; of the *Parlement*, or chief judicial court, to sit in Paris for two months at least twice a year to hold assizes and give judgements.

The *Parlement de Paris* resembles the English Parliament somewhat in name; but except for a right, later acquired, of registering royal edicts, its work was entirely judicial, not legislative. The body in France that most nearly corresponded to the English Parliament was the 'States-General', composed of representatives of the three 'Estates' or classes, of clergy, nobles, and citizens. The peasants of France, who composed the greater part of her population, were not represented at all.

Philip IV summoned the 'States-General' several times to

approve his suggestions; but, unlike the 'Model Parliament' called by his English contemporary Edward I for similar reasons, it never developed into a legislative assembly that could act as a competent check upon royal tyranny, but existed merely as it seemed to accept responsibility for its ruler's laws and financial demands, whether good or bad. Its weakness arose partly from the fact that it often sat only for a day at a time and so had no leisure to discuss the measures laid before it, but still more owing to the class selfishness that prevented the three classes from combining to insist on reforms before they would vote any taxes.

This was very unfortunate for France, since on the one occasion that the nobles and burghers actually did combine in refusing to submit to an especially obnoxious *gabelle* that hit both their pockets, Philip IV was forced to yield, reluctantly enough because the loss of the money led to his failure in a war in Flanders.

Flanders was a fief of the French crown, and because its count, his tenant-in-chief, had dared to rebel against him, Philip had flung him into prison and declared his lands confiscated. Then with his queen he had ridden north to visit this territory now owning direct allegiance to himself, in the belief that he had nothing to do but to give orders to its inhabitants and await their immediate fulfilment. The chroniclers tell us that the royal pair were overcome with astonishment at the display of fine clothes and jewels made by the burghers of Bruges to do them honour.

'I thought that there was only one Queen in France,' exclaimed Philip's consort discontentedly. 'Here I see at least six hundred.' The King, always with an eye to the main chance, regarded the brilliant throng more philosophically. They seemed to him very suitable subjects for taxation; but the Flemings had won their wealth by a sturdy independence of spirit both in the market-place and on the high seas: they had been indifferent to the fate of their count, but at any time preferred the risks of rebellion to being plucked like geese by the King of France.

On the field of Courtrai, where Philip brought his army to

punish their insolence, the Flemish burghers taught Europe, as their Milanese fellows had at Legnano in the twelfth century, that citizen levies could hold their own against heavily-armed feudal troops; and though the King's careful generalship redeemed this defeat two years later, he found the victory he obtained barren of fruit. Within a few weeks of the burghers' apparent collapse yet another citizen army had rallied to attack the royal camp, and Philip, declaring angrily that 'it rained Flemings', was driven to conclude a peace.

Besides hating the independence of the Flemings, Philip IV grudged the English supremacy over the Duchy of Guienne that his grandfather had so willingly acknowledged. To his jealous eyes it ran its wedge like an alien dagger into the heart of his kingdom; and watching his opportunity until Edward I was involved in wars with Wales and Scotland, Philip crossed the borders of the Duchy, and by force or craft obtained control of the greater number of its fortresses. There is little doubt that had he lived he would gradually have absorbed the whole of the southern provinces; but when only forty-six he died, mourned by few of his subjects, and yet one of the kings who had set his stamp with the most lasting results upon the government of France.

Supplementary Dates. For Chronological Summary, see pp. 368–73.

The Children's Crusade	1212
Philip III of France	1270–85
Edward I of England	1272–1307
Clement V	1305–14
Battle of Courtrai	1302

XVIII

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

DURING fourteen years, from 1314 to 1328, three sons of Philip IV reigned in rapid succession; but with the death of the last the main line of the House of Capet came to an end, and the crown passed to his nephew and namesake Philip of Valois.[1] The latter declared that his claims were based on a clause of the old Salic Law[2] forbidding a woman to inherit landed property, because as it happened Philip IV had left a daughter Isabel, who had married Edward II of England, and their son Edward III loudly protested that his right to the throne of France was stronger than that of the Valois. The Salic Law, Edward maintained, might prevent a woman from succeeding to the throne, but there was nothing in this restriction to forbid the inheritance passing to her male heirs.

The question of the Salic Law is important because its different interpretations were the immediate excuse for opening hostilities between England and France in that long and weary struggle called the 'Hundred Years' War'. There were of course other and far deeper reasons. One of these reasons was that English kings had never forgotten or forgiven John's expulsion from Normandy. They wanted to avenge this ignominious defeat and also Philip IV's encroachments in the Duchy of Guienne, that, united to his policy of supporting the Scottish chieftains in their war of independence, had been a steady source of disaster to England since the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Because of his failure in Scotland and the revolts of his turbulent barons Edward II was murdered; and Edward III,

[1] See Genealogical Table, p. 378. [2] See p. 55.

taking warning from his father's fate, welcomed the war with France, not merely in the hope of revenge and glory, but still more in order to find an occupation for the hot English blood that might otherwise in the course of its embittered feuds murder him.

He rode forth to battle, the hero of his court and of the chivalry of England; but no less, as it happened, the champion of her middle classes, who cheerfully put their hands in their pockets to pay for his first campaigns. The reason of their enthusiasm for this war was that Philip of Valois, in order to annoy his rival, had commanded his Flemish subjects to trade no longer with the English. Now English sheep were the best in Europe (so valuable that their export was forbidden lest another nation should obtain the breed), and English wool was the raw material of all others on which Flanders depended for the wealth and prosperity gained by her looms and factories. Before this time English kings had encouraged Flemish trade, establishing 'Staple' markets in certain towns under their protection, where merchants of both countries could meet and bargain over their wares. Wishing to retaliate on Philip VI, however, Edward III stopped the export of wool, though at the same time he offered good terms and advantages to any of the manufacturers of Bruges and Ghent who might care to settle in Norfolk or on the East Coast and set up factories there as English subjects.

Such a suggestion could not satisfy the Flemish national spirit, and in the large towns discontent with the French king grew daily. At last one of the popular leaders, Jacob van Artevelde, 'the Brewer of Ghent', began to rouse his countrymen by inflammatory speeches. 'He showed them', says the chronicler, 'that they could not live without the King of England'; and his many commercial arguments he strengthened with others intended to win those who might hesitate to break their oath of allegiance, assuring them that Edward III was in truth by right of birth King of France.

Rebellion sprang up on all sides in response; and when, in 1338, Edward III actually embarked on the war, he had

behind him not only the English wool-farmers, but also the majority of Flemish merchants and artisans, alike convinced that his victory would open Flemish markets to trade across the Channel.

The Hundred Years' War falls into two distinct periods: the first, the contest waged by the Angevin Edward III against the House of Valois, a struggle that lasted until 1375; the second, a similar effort begun by the Lancastrian Kings of England in 1415 after a time of almost suspended hostilities under Richard II. In each period there is the same switchback course to the campaigns, as they rise towards a high-water mark of English successes only to sink away to final French achievement.

The first of the great English victories was fittingly a naval battle, destined to avenge long years during which French raiders had harried the south coast, penetrated up the Solent, and even set fire to large towns like Southampton. In June 1340, near the entrance to the port of Sluys, some two hundred English vessels of all makes and sizes came upon the French fleet, drawn up in four lines closely chained together so as to form a kind of bulwark to the harbour. On the decks of the tall ships, the turrets of which were piled with stones and other missiles, were hundreds of Genoese archers; but the English bowmen at this time had no match in Europe for long-distance accuracy and steadiness, and the whistling fire of their arrows soon drove their hired rivals into hiding and enabled the English men-at-arms to board the vessels opposite them almost unopposed.

From this moment panic set in along the French lines, and the greater number of ships, unable to escape because of the chains that bound them together, were sunk at anchor, with, according to the chroniclers, twenty-five thousand of their crews and fighting-material.

The English were now masters of the Channel, and Edward III was enabled to transplant an army to Flanders, but no triumph in any way corresponding to the victory of Sluys rewarded his efforts in this field of warfare. The campaign

became a tedious affair of sieges; and the Flemings, cooling from their first sympathies, came to dislike the English and to accuse Jacob van Artevelde of supplying Edward III with money, merely in order to forward his personal ambitions. This charge the Flemish leader stoutly denied, but when, hearing the people of Ghent hooting him in the street outside his house, he stepped out on to the balcony and tried to clear himself, the mob surged forward, and, refusing to listen to a word, broke in through the barred doors and murdered him. This was ill news for Edward III, but angry though he was at the fate of his ally, he had neither sufficient men nor money to exact vengeance. Instead he himself determined to try a new theatre of war, for, as well as his army in Flanders, he had other forces fighting the French in Normandy and Guienne.

Edward landed in Normandy; and at Creci, to the north of the Somme, as he marched towards Calais, he was overtaken by Philip of Valois in command of a very large but undisciplined force.

'You must know', says Froissart, the famous chronicler of this first period of the Hundred Years' War, 'that the French troops did not advance in any particular order, and that as soon as their King came in sight of the English his blood began to boil, and he cried out to his Marshals, "Order the Genoese forward and begin the battle in the name of God and St. Denys!"'

These Genoese were archers, who had already marched on foot so far and at such a pace that they were exhausted; and when, against their will, they sullenly advanced, their bows that were wet from a thunderstorm proved slack and untrue. The sun also, that had just emerged from behind a cloud, shone in their eyes and dazzled them. Silently the English bowmen waited as they drew near, shouting hoarsely, and then of a sudden poured into the weary ranks such a multitude of arrows that 'it seemed as though it snowed'.

The Genoese, utterly disheartened, broke and fled; at which the French king, choking with rage, cried, 'Kill me this rabble that cumbers our road without any reason'; but the English

fire never ceased; and the French knights and men-at-arms that came to take the place of the Genoese and rode them underfoot fell in their turn with the shafts piercing through the joints of their heavy armour.

Again, at Creci it was made evident to Europe that the old feudal order of battle was passing away. Victory fell not to the knight armoured with his horse like a slowly-moving turret, but to the clear-eyed, leather-clad bowman, or the foot-soldier quick with his knife or spear. The French fought gallantly at Creci, and none more fiercely than Philip of Valois, whose horse was killed beneath him; but courage cannot wipe out bad generalship, and when at last he consented to retreat he left eleven princes of the blood-royal and over a thousand of his knights stretched on the battle-field.

The defeat of Creci took from Calais any hope of French succour, and in the following year after a prolonged siege it surrendered to the English and became the most cherished of all their possessions across the seas. 'The Commons of England', wrote Froissart, 'love Calais more than any town in the world, for they say that as long as they are masters of Calais they hold the keys of France at their girdle.'

Death at the battle of Creci, decked in all the panoply of mediaeval warfare, had taken its toll of the chivalry of France and England. Now, in an open and ghastly form, indifferent alike to race or creed, it stalked across Europe, visiting palace and castle but sweeping with a still more ruthless scythe the slum and the hovel. Somewhere in the far East the 'Black Death', as it was later called, had its origin, and wherever it passed, moving westward, villages, nay, even towns, disappeared.

More than thirteen million people are said to have perished in China, India was almost depopulated, and at last in 1347 Europe also was smitten. Very swift was the blow, for many victims of the plague died in a few hours, the majority within five days; and contemporary writers tell us of ships, that left an eastern harbour with their full complement of crew, found drifting in the Mediterranean a few weeks later without a living soul on board to take the helm; of towns where the dead

were so many that there was none to bury them; of villages where the peasants fell like cattle in the fields and by the wayside unnoticed.

In Italy, in France, in England, there is the same record of misery and terror. Boccaccio, the Italian writer, describes in his book, the *Decameron*, how the wealthy nobles and maidens of Florence fled from the plague-stricken town to a villa without the walls, there to pass their days in telling one another tales. These tales have made Boccaccio famous as the first great European novelist; but in reality not many even of the wealthy could keep beyond the range of infection, and Boccaccio himself says elsewhere 'these who first set the example of forsaking others languished where there was no one to take pity on them'.

Neither courage, nor devotion, nor selfishness could avail against the dread scourge; though like all diseases its ravages were most virulent where small dwellings were crowded together or where dirt and insanitary conditions prevailed. 'They fell sick by thousands,' says Boccaccio of the poorer classes, 'and having no one whatever to attend them, most of them died.' According to a doctor in the south of France, 'the number of those swept away was greater than those left alive.' In the once thriving port of Marseilles 'so many died that it remained like an uninhabited place'. Another French writer, speaking of Paris, says, 'there was so great a mortality of people of both sexes . . . that they could hardly be buried.' 'There was no city, nor town, nor hamlet,' writes an Englishman of his own country, 'nor even, save in rare instances, any house, in which this plague did not carry off the whole or the greater portion of the inhabitants.'

One immediate result of the Black Death was to put a temporary stop to the war between England and France; for armies were reduced to a fraction of their former strength and rival kings forgot words like 'glory' or 'conquest' in terrified contemplation of an enemy against whom all their weapons were powerless.

Other and more lasting effects were experienced everywhere, for town and village life was completely disorganized: magis-

trates, city officials, priests, and doctors had perished in such numbers that it was difficult to replace them: criminals plundered deserted houses unchecked: the usually law-abiding, deprived of the guidance to which they had been accustomed, gave themselves up to a dissolute life, trying to drown all thoughts of the past and future in any enjoyment they could find in the present. Work almost ceased: the looms stood idle, the ships remained without cargoes, the fields were neither reaped of the one harvest nor sown for the next. The peasants, when reproached, declared that the plague had been a sign of the end of the world and that therefore to labour was a waste of time. 'All things were dearer,' says a Frenchman: 'furniture, food, and merchandise of all sorts doubled in price: servants would only work for higher wages.'

In the years following the Black Death the labouring classes of Europe discovered for the first time their value. They were the necessary foundation to the scheme of mediaeval life, the base of the feudal pyramid; and, since they were now few in number, masters began to compete for their services. Thus they were able to demand a better wage for their work and improved conditions; but here the governments of the day, that ruled in the interests of the nobles and middle classes, stepped in, forbade wages to be raised, or villeins and serfs to leave their homes and seek better terms in another neighbourhood. The discontent of those held down with an iron hand, yet half awake to the possibilities of greater freedom, seethed towards revolution; but few mediaeval kings chose to look below the surface of national life, and in the case of England Edward III was certainly not enough of a statesman to do so.

In 1355 he renewed the war with France, hoping that by victories he would be able to fill his own purse from French ransoms and pillage as well as to drug the disordered popular mind at home with showy triumphs. His eldest son, Edward, the Black Prince, who had gained his spurs at Creci, landed at Bordeaux and marched through Guienne, the English armies like the French being mainly composed of 'companies', that is, of hired troops under military captains, the terror of friends and

foes alike; for with impartial ruthlessness they trampled down corn and vineyards as they passed, pillaged towns, and burned farms and villages.

Philip of Valois was dead, but his son, John 'the Good', had succeeded him, and earned his title, it must be supposed, by his punctilious regard for the laws of mediaeval chivalry. His reckless daring, extravagance, and rash generalship made him at any rate a very bad ruler according to modern standards. Froissart says that on the field of Poitiers, where the two armies met, 'King John on his part proved himself a good knight; indeed, if the fourth of his people had behaved as well, the day would have been his own.'

This is extremely doubtful, for the French, though far the larger force, were outmanœuvred from the first. The Black Prince had the gift of generalship and disposed his army so that it was hidden amid the slopes of a thick vineyard, laying an ambush of skilled archers behind the shelter of a hedge. As King John's cavalry charged towards the only gap, in order to clear a road for their main army, they were mown down by a merciless fire at short range from the ambush; while in the ensuing confusion English knights swept round on the French flank and put the foot-soldiers to flight. The Black Prince's victory was complete, for King John and his principal nobles were surrounded and taken prisoners after a fierce conflict in which for a long time they refused to surrender. 'They behaved themselves so loyally', says Froissart, 'that their heirs to this day are honoured for their sake': and Prince Edward, waiting on his royal captive that night at dinner, awarded him the 'prize and garland' of gallantry above all other combatants.

Evil days followed in France, where her king's chivalry could not pay his enormous ransom nor those of his distinguished fellow prisoners. For this money merchants must sweat and save, and the peasants toil longer hours on starvation rations; while the 'companies', absolved by a truce from regular warfare, exacted their daily bread at the sword-point when and where they chose.

Famous captains, who were really infamous brigands, took

their toll of sheep and corn and grapes; and those farmers and labourers who refused, or could not give what they required, they flung alive on to bonfires, while they tortured and mutilated their wives and families. Against such wickedness there was no protection either from the government or overlords; indeed, the latter were as cruel as the brigand chiefs, extorting the very means of livelihood from their tenants and serfs to pay for the distractions of a court never more extravagant and pleasure-seeking than in this hour of national disaster.

'Jacques Bonhomme,' the French noble would say mockingly of the peasant, 'has a broad back . . . he will pull out his purse fast enough if he is beaten.' The day came, however, when Jacques Bonhomme, grown reckless in his misery, pulled out his knife instead, and, in the words of Froissart, became like a 'mad dog'. He had neither leaders nor any hope of reform, nothing but a seething desire for revenge; and in the 'Jacquerie', as the peasant rebellion of this date was called, he inflicted on the nobles and their families all the horrors that he himself, standing by helpless, had seen perpetrated on his own belongings. Castles were burned, their furniture and treasures looted and destroyed, their owners were roasted at slow fires, their wives and daughters violated, their children tortured and massacred.

This is one of the most hideous scenes in French history, the darker because France in her blindness learned no lesson from it. The nobles, who soon gained the upper hand against these wild undisciplined hordes, exacted a vengeance in proportion to the crimes committed, and fixed the yoke of serfdom more surely than ever on the shoulders of Jacques Bonhomme. This was the only way, in their conception, to deal with such a mad dog; but Jacques Bonhomme was in reality an outraged human being of flesh and blood like those who loathed and despised him; and during centuries of tyranny his anger grew in force and bitterness until in the Revolution of 1789 it burst forth with a violence against both guilty and innocent that no power in France was strong enough to stem.

The outrages of the Jacquerie unfortunately discredited real efforts at reform that had been initiated in Paris by the leader

of the middle classes, the Provost of Merchants, Étienne Marcel. This Marcel had demanded that the States-General should be called regularly twice a year, that the Dauphin Charles,[1] eldest son of King John, who was acting as regent during his father's imprisonment, should send away his favourites, and that instead of these fraudulent ministers a standing council of elected representatives should be set up to advise the crown.

To these and many other reforms the Dauphin pretended to yield under the pressure of public opinion; but he soon broke all his promises and began to rule again as he chose. Marcel, roused to indignation, summoned his citizen levies, and, breaking into the Prince's palace, ordered his men-at-arms to seize two of the most hated ministers and drag them to the royal presence. 'Do that quickly for which you were brought,' he said to the soldiers; whereupon they slew the favourites as they crouched at Charles's feet, their fingers clinging to his robe.

This act of violence won for Étienne Marcel the undying hatred of the Dauphin and his court, and from this time the decline of his influence may be traced. In order to maintain his power the popular leader was driven to condone the excesses of the peasants, in their rebellion, that had shocked the whole of France, and to ally himself with Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, to whom he promised to deliver the keys of Paris in return for his support against the Dauphin.

This was a fatal move, for Charles the Bad did not care at all for the interests of the middle classes: he only wished to gain some secret or advantage worth selling, and at once betrayed Étienne to his foes as soon as the Dauphin paid him a sufficient price. Then a trap was arranged, and Marcel killed in the gateway of Paris as he was about to open its strong bars to his treacherous ally. With his death all attempts at securing a more liberal and responsible government failed.

The country, indeed, had sunk into the apathy of exhaustion;

[1] The province of Dauphiné, formerly an imperial fief, was acquired by the French crown in 1349, and became a regular 'appanage' of the King's eldest son, conferring on him the title of 'Dauphin', equivalent to the English title 'Prince of Wales'.

and two years later the Treaty of Bretigni, that represents the high-water mark of English power in France, was thankfully signed. In return for Edward III's surrender of his claim to the French throne, his right to the Duchy of Guienne as well as

to Calais and the country immediately round its walls was recognized, without any of the feudal obligations that had been such a fruitful source of trouble in old days.

Peace now seemed possible for an indefinite period; but, in truth, so long as two hostile nations divided France there was

always the likelihood of fresh discord; and the Dauphin, who had succeeded his father, King John, gently fanned the flames whenever he thought that the political wind blew to his advantage. From a timid, peevish youth, one of the first to fly in terror from the field of Poitiers, he had developed into an astute politician, whose successful efforts to regain the lost territories of France earned him the title of 'Wise'.

King Edward III and his son professed to despise this prince, who knew not how to wield a lance to any purpose; but Charles, though feeble in body and a student rather than a soldier at heart, knew how to choose good captains to serve him in the field; and one of these—the famous Bertrand du Guesclin, said to have been the ugliest knight and best fighter of his time—became the hero of many a battle against the English, first of all in France, and later in Spain.

It was owing to the war in Spain that the English hold over the south of France was first shaken; for the Black Prince, who had been created Duke of Guienne, unwisely listened to the exiled King of Castile, Pedro the Cruel, who came to Bordeaux begging his assistance against the usurper of his throne. This was his illegitimate brother, Henry of Trastamara. The English Prince at once declared that chivalry demanded that he should help the rightful king. Perhaps he remembered the strong bond that there had been between England and Castile ever since his great-grandfather, Edward I, had married the Spanish Eleanor: perhaps it was the promise of large sums of money that Pedro declared would reward the victorious troops: it is more likely, however, that the fiery soldier was moved by the news that Henry of Trastamara had gained his throne through French assistance and by the deeds of arms of the renowned Du Guesclin.

In 1367 the English Prince crossed the Pyrenees, and at Navarette, near the river Ebro, his English archers and good generalship proved a match once more for his foes. Although the Spaniards were in vastly superior numbers they were mown down as they rashly charged to the attack; and Henry of Trastamara was driven from the field, leaving Du Guesclin

a prisoner and his brother Pedro once more able to assert his kingship.

The real victors of Navarette now had cause to repent their alliance. Sickness, due to the heat of the climate and strange food, had thinned their ranks even more than the actual warfare: the money promised by Pedro the Cruel was not forthcoming; indeed, that wily scoundrel, after atrocities committed against his helpless prisoners that fully bore out his nickname, had slipped away to secure his throne, while the Black Prince was in no position to pursue him, and could gain little satisfaction by correspondence. Sullen and weary, with the fever already lowering his vitality that was finally to cut short his life, Edward of Wales arrived in Bordeaux with his almost starving 'companies'. Because he had no money to pay them, he set them free to ravage southern France, while in order to fill his exchequer he imposed a tax on every hearth in Guienne.

These measures proved him no statesman, whatever his generalship. In the early days of the Hundred Years' War Guienne had looked coldly on Paris, and appreciated a distant ruler who secured her liberty of action; now, victim of a policy of mingled pillage and exactions, she soon came to regard her English rulers as foreign tyrants. Thus an appeal was made by the men of Guienne to Charles V, and he, in defiance of the terms of the Treaty of Bretigni, summoned Prince Edward to Paris—as though he were his vassal—to answer the charges made against him. 'Gladly we will answer our summons,' replied the Prince, when he heard. 'We will go as the King of France has ordered us, but with helm on head and sixty thousand men.'

They were bold words; but the haughty spirit that dictated them spoke from the mouth of a dying man, and the Black Prince never lived to fulfil his boast. His place in France was taken by his younger brother, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who proved himself an indifferent general. In 1373 Duke John marched from Calais into the heart of France, his army burning villages as it went; but though he pressed deeper and ever deeper into the enemy's country, he met no open foes nor towns

that he could take without a siege. 'Let them be,' said Charles 'the Wise', when his indignant nobles pleaded for leave to fight a pitched battle; 'by burnings they shall not seize our heritage. Though a storm and tempest rage together over a land they disperse themselves: so will it be with these English.'

Ever since the Treaty of Bretigni Charles had been planning profitable alliances with foreign rulers that would leave the English friendless; while, like Henry the Fowler of Germany, he had fortified his cities against invasion. With the advent of winter Lancaster and his men could find no food nor succour from any local barons; and when at last the remnant of his once proud army reached Bordeaux, it was without a single horse, and leaving a track of sick and dying to be cut off by guerrilla bands. He had not lost a single battle, but he was none the less defeated, and had imperilled the English cause in France.

The truce of 1375 that practically closed the first period of the Hundred Years' War left to Edward III and his successors no more than the coast towns of Calais, Cherbourg, Brest, Bayonne, and Bordeaux.

When in 1415 Henry V of England formally claimed the throne of France, and by so doing renewed the war that had languished since 1375, he had no satisfactory argument save his sword to uphold his demands. Grandson of John of Gaunt, and son of the royal usurper Henry IV, who had deposed and killed his cousin Richard II, Henry V hoped by a successful campaign to establish the popularity of the Lancastrian dynasty. He wished also, like most mediaeval rulers, to find a battle-ground for his barons in any territory except his own. It is only fair to add that of the modern belief that the one possible excuse for shedding human blood is a righteous cause he had not the faintest conception.

'War for war's sake' might have been the motto of this most mediaeval of all English sovereigns; but if his purpose is indefensible to-day in its selfish callousness, he at any rate chose an admirable time in which to put it into execution; for France, that had begun to recover a semblance of nationality under the rule

of Charles 'the Wise', had degenerated into anarchy under his son Charles 'the Mad'.

First as a minor, for he was only eleven at the time of his accession, and later when he developed frequent attacks of insanity, Charles VI was destined to be some one else's tool, while round his person raged those factions for which Louis VIII had shortsightedly prepared when he set the example of creating appanages.[1] First one 'Prince of the Lilies' and then another strove to control the court and government in their own interests; but the most formidable rivals at the beginning of the fifteenth century were the Houses of Burgundy and Armagnac.

The latter centred in the person of the young Charles, Duke of Orleans, the King's nephew and a son-in-law of Count Bernard of Armagnac, who gave his name to the party: the other was his cousin, John 'the Fearless', Duke of Burgundy, who was also by inheritance from his mother Count of Flanders, and therefore ruler of that great middle province lying between France and the Empire.

The King himself in his moments of sanity inclined to the side of Charles of Orleans and the Armagnacs; and it happened that just at the time when Henry V of England landed in Normandy and laid siege to Harfleur the Armagnacs controlled Paris. It was their faction therefore that raised an army and sent it northwards to oppose the invaders, while John of Burgundy stood aloof, for besides being unwilling to help the Armagnacs he was reluctant to embroil himself in a war with England, on whose wool trade the commercial fortunes of his Flemish towns depended.

At Agincourt Henry V, who had taken Harfleur and was marching towards Calais, came upon his foes drawn up across the road that he must follow in such vastly superior numbers that they seemed overwhelming. The battle that followed, however, showed that the French had learned no military lesson from previous disasters. The heavily-armed, undisciplined noble on horseback was still their main hope, and on this dark October day he floundered helplessly in the mud, unable to charge, scarcely able to extricate himself, an easy victim for his

[1] See p. 223.

enemy's shafts. The slaughter was tremendous; for Henry, receiving a false report that a new French army was appearing on the horizon, commanded his prisoners to be killed, and numbers had perished before the mistake was discovered and the order could be reversed.

When the news of the defeat and massacre at Agincourt reached Paris, that had always hated the Armagnacs, the indignant populace broke into rebellion, crying, 'Burgundy and Peace!' but the movement was suppressed, and it was not till 1418 that John 'the Fearless' succeeded in entering the capital. By this time Henry V, who had returned to England after his victory, was once more back in France conquering Normandy; and French indignation was roused to white heat when it was known that Rouen, the old capital of the Duchy, had been forced to surrender to his victorious arms.

Even the Duke of Burgundy, who still disliked war with England, felt that he must take some steps to prevent further encroachments; and, after negotiations with the enemy had failed owing to their arrogant demands, he suggested an agreement with the Armagnacs, in order that France, if she must fight, should at least present a united front to her foes.

Here was the moment for France's regeneration; for the head of the Armagnac faction at this date was the Dauphin Charles, son of Charles 'the Mad', and in response to his rival's olive branch he consented to meet him on the bridge of Montereau in order that the old rift might be cemented. In token of submission and goodwill John of Burgundy knelt to kiss the Prince's hand; but, as he did so, an Armagnac still burning with party hate sprang forward and plunged his dagger into his side. A shout of horror and rage arose from the Burgundians, and as they carried away the body of John 'the Fearless' they swore that this murder had been arranged from the beginning and that they would never pay allegiance again to the false Dauphin.

In the Treaty of Troyes that was forthwith negotiated with the English they ratified this vow, for Henry V of England received the hand of the mad king's daughter Catherine in marriage and was recognized as his heir to the throne of France.

Two years later died both Henry V and Charles VI, leaving France divided into two camps, one lying mainly in the north and east, that acknowledged as ruler the infant Henry VI, son of Henry V and Catherine; the other in the south and south-west, that obeyed the Valois Charles VII.

The Treaty of Troyes marks the high-water mark of English power in France during the second period of the Hundred Years' War; for, though the banners that Henry V had carried so triumphantly at Agincourt were pushed steadily southward into Armagnac territory after this date, yet the influence of the invaders was already on the wane. The agreement that gave France to a foreigner and a national enemy had been made only with a section of the French nation; and some of those who in the heat of their anger against the Armagnacs had consented to its terms were soon secretly ashamed of their strange allegiance.

When Charles the Dauphin became Charles VII he ceased to appear merely the leader of a party discredited by its murder of the Duke of Burgundy. He became a national figure; and though his enemies might call him in derision 'King of Bourges' because he dared not come to Paris but ruled only from a town in central France, yet he remained in spite of all their ridicule a king and a Frenchman. Had he been less timid and selfish, more ready to run risks and exert himself rather than to idle away his time with unworthy favourites, there is no doubt that he could have hastened the English collapse. Instead he allowed those who fostered his indolence and hatred of public affairs in order to increase their own power to hinder a reconciliation with the Burgundians that might have been the salvation of France.

Philip 'the Good', son of John 'the Fearless', disliked the Dauphin as his father's murderer, but he had little love for his English allies. By marriage and skilful diplomacy he had absorbed a great part of modern Holland into his already vast inheritance and could assume the state and importance of an independent sovereign. With England he felt that he could treat as an equal, and now regarded with dismay the idea that

she might permanently control both sides of the Channel. So long as John, Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V, acted as regent for his young nephew with statesmanlike moderation, an outward semblance of friendship was maintained ; but Bedford could with difficulty keep in order his quarrelsome, irresponsible younger brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who ruled in England, and with still greater difficulty quell the sullen discontent of the people of Paris who, suffering from starvation as the result of a prolonged war, professed to regard a foreign king as the source of all their troubles.

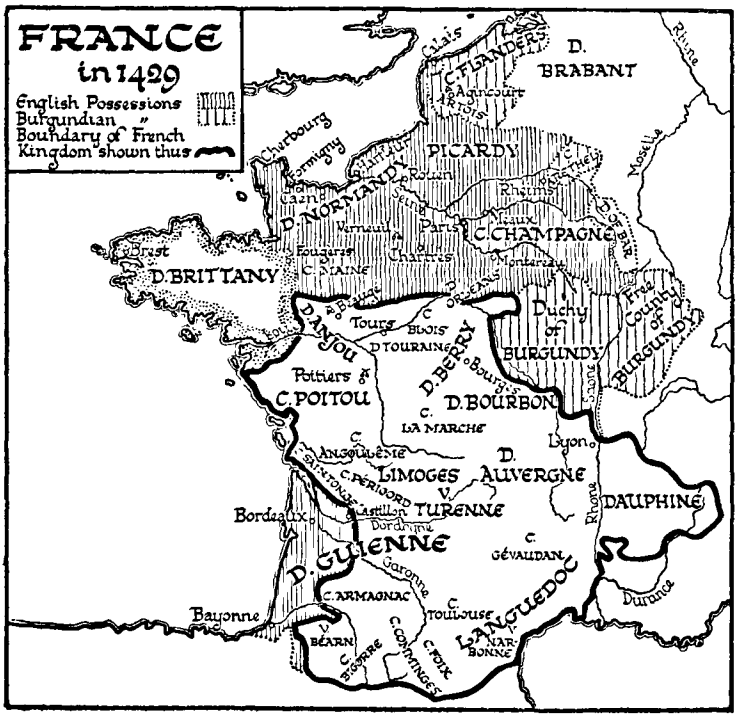
Only the prestige of English arms retained the loyalty of northern France. 'Two hundred English would drive five hundred French before them,' says a chronicler of the day; but salvation was to come to France from an unexpected quarter, and enable the same writer to add proudly, 'Now two hundred French would chase and beat four hundred English.'

In the village of Domremy on the Upper Meuse there lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century a peasant maid, Jeanne d'Arc, who was, according to the description of a fellow villager, 'modest, simple, devout, went gladly to Church and sacred places, worked, sewed, hoed in the fields, and did what was needful about the house.' Up till the age of thirteen Jeanne had been like other light-hearted girls, but it was then that a change came into her life : voices seemed to draw her away from her companions and to speak to her from behind a brilliant cloud, and later she had visions of St. Catherine and of St. Michael, whose painted effigies she knew in church.

'I saw them with my bodily eyes as clearly as I see you,' she said when questioned as to these appearances, and admitted that at first she was afraid but that afterwards they brought her comfort. Always they came with the same message, in her own words, 'that she must change her course of life and do marvellous deeds, for the King of Heaven had chosen her to aid the King of France.'

Jeanne d'Arc was no hysterical visionary: she had always a fund of common sense, and knew how ridiculous the idea that she, an uneducated peasant girl, was called to save France would

seem to the world. For some time she tried to forget the message her Voices told her; but at last it was borne in upon her that God had given her a mission, and from this time neither her indignant father nor timid friends could turn her from her purpose.



Of all the difficulties and checks that she encountered before at last, at the age of seventeen, she was allowed to have audience with Charles VII, there is no space to tell here. News of her persistence had spread abroad, and the torch-lit hall of the castle into which Jeanne was shown was packed with gaily-clad courtiers, and standing amongst them the King, in no way distinguished from the others by his dress or any outward

pomp. Every one believed that the peasant-maid would be dazzled; but she, who had seen no portrait of the King and lived all her life in the quiet little village of Domremy, showed no confusion at the hundreds of eyes fixed on her. Recognizing at once the man with whom her mission was concerned she went straight to him and said, 'My noble lord, I come from God to help you and your realm.'

There must have been something arresting in Jeanne's simplicity and frankness contrasted with that corrupt atmosphere. Even the feeble king was moved; and, when she had been questioned and approved by his bishops, he allowed her to ride forth, as she wished, with the armies of France to save for him the important town of Orleans that was closely besieged by the English. She went in armour with a sword in hand and a banner, and those who rode with her felt her absolute belief in victory, and into their hearts stole the magic influence of her own gay courage and hope.

We have often spoken of 'chivalry', the ideal of good conduct in the Middle Ages. The kings, princes, and knights, whose prowess has made the chronicles of Froissart famous, were to their journalist veritable heroes of chivalry, exponents of courage, courtesy, and breeding. Yet to modern eyes these qualities seem often tarnished, since the heroes who flaunted them were in no way ashamed of vices like cruelty, selfishness, or snobbery. A King John of France would die in a foreign prison rather than break his parole, but he would disdainfully ride down a 'rabble' of archers whom his negligence had left too tired to fight his battles. The Black Prince would wait like a servant on his royal prisoner, but accept as a brother-in-arms to be succoured a human devil like Pedro the Cruel; or put a town to the sword, as he did at Limoges, old men, women, and children, because it had dared to set him at defiance.

There is nothing of this tarnish in the chivalry of the peasant-maid who saved France. Pure gold were her knightly deeds, yet achieved without a trace of the prig or the boaster. Jeanne d'Arc was always human and therefore lovable, quick in her anger at fraud, yet easily appeased; friendly to king and soldier

alike, yet never losing the simple dignity that was her safeguard in court and camp. Of all mediaeval warriors of whom we read she was the bravest; for she knew what fear was and would often pray not to fall into the hands of her enemies alive, yet she never shirked a battle or went into danger with a downcast face. A slim figure, with her close-cropped dark hair and shining eyes, she rode wherever the fight was thickest, always, in the words of a modern biographer, 'gay and gaily glad,' quick to see her opportunities and follow them up, joyful in victory, generous to her foes, pitiful to the wounded and prisoners.

The sight of her awoke new courage in her countrymen, dismay as at the supernatural in her enemies, who dubbed her a witch and vowed to burn her.

'Suddenly she turned at bay,' says a contemporary account of one of her battles, 'and few as were the men with her she faced the English and advanced on them swiftly with standard displayed. Then fled the English shamefully and the French came back and chased them into their works.'

Orleans was relieved and entered, the reluctant, still half-doubting Charles led to Reims, and there in the ancient capital of France crowned, that all Frenchmen might know who was their true king. 'The Maid' urged that the ceremony should be followed by a rapid march on Paris; but favourites who dreaded her influence whispered other counsels into the royal ear, and Charles dallied and hesitated. When at last he advanced it was to find that the bridges over the Seine had been cut, not by the retreating English but by French treachery.

Paris was ripe for rebellion, and at the sight of 'the Maid' would have murdered her foreign garrison and opened her gates. Bedford was in the north suppressing a revolt, yet Charles, clutching at the excuse of the broken bridges, retreated southwards, disbanding his army and leaving his defender to her fate.

Her Voices now warned Jeanne of impending capture and death, but her mission was to save France, and hearing that the Duke of Burgundy planned to take the important town of Compiègne she rode to its defence with a small force. Under the walls, in the course of a sortie, she was captured, refusing to

surrender. 'I have sworn and given my faith to another than you, and I will keep my oath,' she declared; and through the months that followed, caged and fettered in a dark cell of the castle of Rouen, exposed to the insults of the rough English archers, she maintained her allegiance, saying to her foes of the prince who had failed her so pitiably, 'My King is the most noble of all Christians.'

Frenchmen (some of them bishops, canons, and lawyers of the University of Paris), as well as Englishmen, were amongst those who, after the mockery of a trial, sent Jeanne to be burned as a heretic in the market-place of Rouen. Bravely as she had lived she died, calling on her saints, begging the forgiveness of her enemies, pardoning the evil they had done her. 'That the world', says a modern writer, 'might have no relic of her of whom the world was not worthy, the English threw her ashes into the Seine.'

France, that had betrayed Jeanne d'Arc, needed no relic to keep her memory alive. To-day men and women call her Saint, and one miracle she certainly wrought, for she restored to her country, that through years of anarchy had almost lost belief in itself, the undying sense of its own nationality. 'As to peace with the English,' she had said, 'the only peace possible is for them to return to their own land.' Within little more than twenty years from her death the mission on which she had ridden forth from Domremy had been accomplished, and Calais, of all their French possessions, alone remained to the enemies of France.

In summary of the Hundred Years' War it may be said that from the beginning the English fought in a lost cause. Fortune, military genius, and dogged courage gave to their conquests a fictitious endurance; but nationality is a foe invincible because it has discovered the elixir of life; and when the tide of fortune turned with the coming of 'the Maid' the ebb of English discomfiture was very swift.

In 1435 died the Duke of Bedford, and in the same year Charles VII, moved from his sluggishness, concluded at Arras a treaty with Philip of Burgundy that secured his entry into Paris. By good fortune his young rival in the ensuing campaigns, the English King, Henry VI, had inherited, not the energy and valour of his father, but an anaemic version of his French grandfather's

insanity. Even before his first lapse into melancholia, he was the weak puppet of first one set of influences, then another; and the factions that strove to govern for their own interests in his name lost him first Normandy and then Guienne. Finally they carried their feuds back across the Channel to work out what seemed an almost divine vengeance for the anarchy they had caused in France, in the troubled 'Wars of the Roses'.

Under Charles VII, well named *le bien servi*, France, as she gradually freed herself from a foreign yoke, developed from a mediaeval into the semblance of a modern state. Wise ministers, whom in his later years the King had the sense to substitute for his earlier workless favourites, built up the power of the monarchy, restored its financial credit, and established in the place of the disorderly 'companies' a standing army recruited and controlled by the crown.

These things were not done without opposition, and the rebellion of 'the Praguerie', in which were implicated nearly all the leading nobles of France, including the King's own son, the Dauphin Louis, was a desperate attempt on the part of the aristocracy to shake off the growing pressure of royal control. It failed because the nation, as a whole, saw in submission to an absolute monarch a means, imperfect perhaps but yet the only means available at the moment, of securing the regeneration of France.

It is significant that when Louis XI succeeded to Charles VII he inevitably followed in his father's footsteps, forsaking the interests of the class with which he had first allied himself, in order to rule as an autocrat and fulfil the ideal of kingship in his day.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

Philip VI of France	1328 50	Henry V of England	1413–22
John II of France	1350–64	Henry VI of England	1422–61
Charles V of France	1364–80	Boccaccio	1313–75
Charles VI of France	1380–1422	Jeanne d'Arc	1412–30
Charles VII of France	1422 61		

XIX

SPAIN IN THE MIDDLE AGES

SPAIN has been rightly described as 'one of the most cut up portions of the earth's surface'. A glance at her map will show the numerous mountain ranges that pierce into the heart of the country, dividing her into districts utterly unlike both in climate and soil. Even rivers that elsewhere in Europe, as in the case of the Rhine and the Danube, act as roads of friendship and commerce, are in Spain for the most part unnavigable, running in wild torrents between precipitous banks so as to form an additional hindrance to intercourse.

Geography thus came to play a very great part in the history of mediaeval Spain, deciding that though overrun by Romans, Vandals, Visigoths, and Saracens, no conquest should be ever quite complete, since the invaded could always find inaccessible refuges amongst the mountains. A spirit of provincial independence was also fostered, as in Italy[1]—men learning to say first not 'I am a Spaniard,' but 'I am of Burgos,' or 'of Andalusia,' or of 'Barcelona,' according to their neighbourhood.

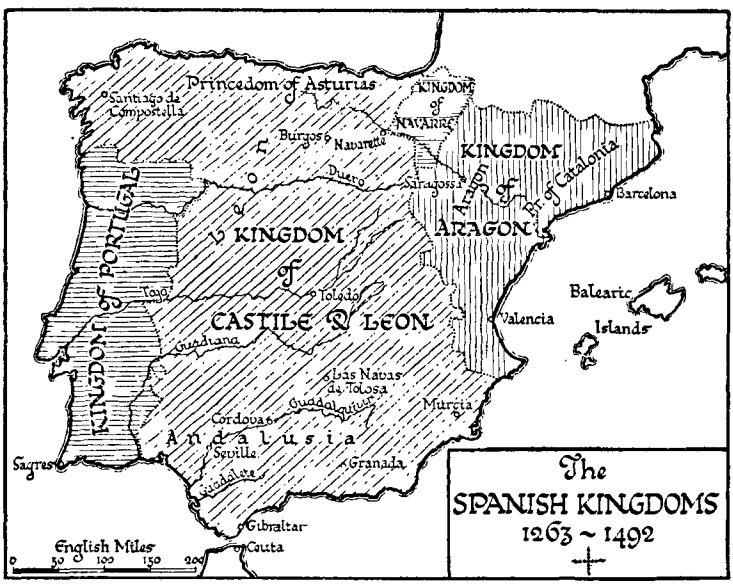
When the Saracens defeated King Rodrigo and his Christian army at the battle of Guadalete,[2] we have seen that they found the subjugation of southern and central Spain an easy matter. Rich towns and districts passed into their hands almost without a blow: the Gothic nobles and their families who should have defended them, weakened by tribal dissensions, fled away northwards to the mountains of Leon and Asturias, while the downtrodden masses that they left behind soon welcomed their new masters.

It was the policy of the Moors to grant a slave his freedom on

[1] See p. 53. [2] See p. 62.

his open acknowledgement of Allah as the one God and Mahomet as his Prophet, while they allowed those Christians and Jews who refused to surrender their faith to live in peace on the payment of a poll-tax not required from Moslems.

The capital of the Saracen kingdom, or 'Caliphate', that was destined to survive practically unmolested for some three hundred years, was the town of Cordova, whose capture the Moors believed had been divinely inspired by Allah, since as their army under



cover of the darkness swept up to the walls, a terrific hail-storm descended that deadened the clatter of approaching hoofs. From a treacherous shepherd one of the captains learned of a part of the fortifications easy to scale; and, climbing up undetected by means of a fig-tree, he let down his long turban to assist his fellows until a sufficient number had mounted to overpower the guards and open the gates to the main army.

To the Spaniards, thus defeated almost in their sleep, Cordova was a fallen city, disgraced by the presence of infidels; yet these

same infidels were to make her luxury and brilliance rival the almost fabulous glories of Bagdad and to win for her culture the grudging admiration of Christian Europe. As we read of her 'Palace of Pleasures', ornamented with gold and precious stones, of her woods of pomegranate and sweet almond, of her gardens and perfumed fountains, of her luxurious rest-houses for travellers without the walls, we are back in the atmosphere of some Eastern fairy tale that clings also around the history of her Caliphs, tinging with romance their loves, their hatreds, and their rivalries.

There are other aspects of Moorish Spain hardly less wonderful when contrasted with the haphazard national development of the rest of Europe. Here were agriculture and industry deliberately stimulated by a close and practical study of such branches of knowledge as science and botany, algebra and arithmetic. Arid soil, that under ordinary mediaeval neglect would have been left a desert, became through canals and irrigation a fertile plain, the garden of rice, sugar, cotton, or oranges. Mathematics applied to everyday needs produced the mariner's compass; scientific brains and intelligent workmen the steel blades of Toledo and Seville, the woven silk fabrics of Granada, and the pottery and velvets of Valencia.

Yet, though knowledge was consciously applied for commercial purposes, the Moors did not set up 'Utility' as an idol for their scholars and tell them that only information that brought material wealth in its train was worth having. Philosophy and literature, as well as science, had their lecture-halls: Greece and the East were searched by Caliphs' orders for manuscripts to fill their libraries; and so world-famous became Cordovan professors that in the twelfth century Christian students hastened to sit at their feet; and the translations of Aristotle by the Arabic professor Averroës became one of the chief sources of authority for the most orthodox 'schoolmen'.

In their search after knowledge for its own sake, the Moors accorded toleration to the best brains of all races. Elsewhere in Europe the Jews were held accursed, protected by Christian rulers so long as their money-bags could be squeezed like a

sponge, but exposed to insult, torture, and death whenever popular fury, aroused by a crusade or an epidemic, demanded an easy outlet for zeal in burning and pillaging houses.

Christian fanaticism had closed nearly every avenue of life to the Jew save that of money-lender, in which he found few competitors, since the law of the Church forbade usury. It then proceeded to condemn him as a blood-sucker because of the high rate of interest that his precarious position induced him to charge for his loans. Thus, despised, hated, and feared, persecution helped to breed in the average Jew the very vices for which he was blamed, namely, the determination to sweat his Christian neighbours, and an arrogant absorption in his own race to the exclusion of all others.

In the cities of the Moors alone the Jew could rise to public eminence, as in Cordova, where teachers of the race were especially noted for their researches in medicine and surgery. Many Spanish Israelites indeed became doctors, and proved themselves so unmistakably superior in knowledge and skill to the ordinary quacks that rulers of Christian states were thankful to employ them when their health was in danger.

It would seem at first sight as if this happy kingdom of the Moors, where culture, comfort, and toleration reigned, must in time succeed in spreading its civilizing influence over Europe; but there was another and darker side to Moslem Spain. The Caliphate of Cordova, like other Moslem states, was the victim of a form of government whose sole bond was the religion of Islam. Its ruler was a tyrant independent of any popular control, and could send even his Grand Vizier, or chief minister, to death by a word. Such an exalted position had its penalties, and the Caliph must keep continual watch lest he should find enemies ready to slay him, not merely amongst his servants, but even more amongst his sons or brothers. Since polygamy prevailed, in nearly every family there were children of rival mothers, who learned from their cradles to hate and fear each other. It depended only, as it seemed, on a little luck or cunning who would succeed to the royal title, and few scrupled to use dagger or poison to ensure themselves the coveted honour.

Out of the feuds and plots of the Moorish court and the rise and fall of Emirs and Sultans in the provinces, Moorish Spain prepared its own downfall during the three centuries that it dominated southern and central Spain.

Away in the north, in Asturias, the 'cradle of the Spanish race', where every peasant considers himself an 'hidalgo' or noble, in the kingdoms of Leon and Navarre, in the counties of Castile and Barcelona, the descendants of the once enfeebled Goths were meanwhile developing into a race of warriors.

Though ardent in his devotion to Christianity, weaving supernatural aid around every victory, the Spaniard did not, in what might be called the first period of 'the Reconquest', show any acute dislike of the Moor. His early struggles were not for religion but for independence, and often a Prince or Count would join with some friendly Emir to overthrow a Christian rival. 'All Kings are alike to me so long as they pay my price!' These words of Rodrigo (Ruy) Diaz, the greatest of Spanish heroes, were typical of his race in the age in which he lived.

This Ruy Diaz, 'El Campeador', or 'the Challenger', as the Christians named him, but more popularly called by his Arabic title 'Al Said' or 'the Cid', meaning 'the Chief', was brave, generous, boastful, and treacherous. A Castilian by race, he held his allegiance to the King of Leon, whose wars he sometimes condescended to wage, as in no way sacred; but when banished by that monarch, who had well-founded suspicions of his loyalty, proceeded unabashed to fight on behalf of his late master's enemy, the Moorish Sultan of Saragossa.

It is evident from the old chronicles and ballads that the Cid himself could rouse and keep the affection of those who served him. When he sent for his relations and friends to tell them that he had been banished by the King of Leon and to ask who would go with him into exile, we are told that 'Alvar Fañez, who was his cousin, answered, "Cid, we will all go with you through desert and through peopled country, and never fail you. In your service will we spend our mules and horses, our wealth and our garments, and ever while we live be unto you loyal friends and vassals": and they all confirmed what Alvar Fañez had said.'

Mediaeval Spain was always ready to admire a warrior; and a great part of the Cid's charm lay, no doubt, in his prowess on the battle-field, when, charging with his good sword 'Tizona' in hand, none could withstand the onslaught. To this admiration was added the deeper feeling of fellowship. Their hero might spill the blood of hundreds to attain his ambitions, but he was yet no noble after the mediaeval French type, despising those of inferior rank; rather a full-blooded Spaniard, keen in his sympathy with all other Spaniards.

As he rode from the town of Burgos on his way to exile the Cid called Alvar Fañez to his side and said, 'Cousin, the poor have no part in the wrong which the King hath done us .... See now that no wrong be done unto them along our road.' 'And an old woman who was standing at her door said, "Go in a lucky minute and make spoil of whatever you wish."'

The Cid's 'luck', or perhaps it would be truer to say his admirable discretion, carried him triumphantly through many campaigns—at times reconciled with the Christian king and fighting under his banner, at others laying waste his lands as a Moorish ally. At length he reached the summit of his fortunes and carved himself a principality out of the Moorish province of Valencia; and as ruler of this state made little pretence of being any one's vassal, but boasted that he, a Rodrigo, would free Andalusia as another Rodrigo had let her fall into bondage.

This kingly achievement was denied him, for even heroes fail; so that a time came when he fell ill, and the Moors invaded his land, and because he could no longer fight against them he turned his face to the wall and died. Yet his last victory was still to come; for his followers, who had served him so faithfully, embalmed his body, and they set him on his war-horse and bound 'Tizona' in his hand, and so they led him out of the city against his foes. Instead of weeping and lamentations the Cid's widow had ordered the church bells to be rung and war trumpets to be blown so that the Moors did not know their great enemy was dead; but imagining that he charged amongst them, terrible in his wrath as of old, they broke and fled.

In spite of this victory Valencia fell back under the rule of the

Moors, but she never forgot 'Ruy Diaz', and is proud to this day to be called 'Valencia of the Cid'.

The second period of the reconquest of Spain by the Christians may be called the crusading period, and continued until the fall of Granada in 1492. It began not at any fixed date, but in the gradual realization by the Christian states during the twelfth century that their war with the Moors was something quite distinct and ever so much more important than their almost fraternal feuds with one another. This dawning conviction was intensified into a faith, when the Moorish kingdom, that, owing to the feebleness and corruption of its government, had almost ceased to be a kingdom and split up into a number of warring states, was towards the end of the twelfth century overrun and temporarily welded together by a fierce Berber tribe from North Africa, the Almohades.

The Almohades, like earlier followers of Mahomet, were definitely hostile to both Christians and Jews, and so the feeling of religious bitterness grew; and the war that at first was a series of victories for the infidel developed its character of a crusade.

Other crusades, we have seen, gained public support; and at the beginning of the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III, no less alive to his responsibility towards Spain than towards the Holy Land, sent a recruiting appeal to all the countries of Europe. This was answered by the arrival of bands of Templars, Hospitallers, and other young warriors anxious to win their spurs against the heathen. Spain herself founded several Military Orders, of which the most famous was the Order of Santiago, that is, of St. James, called after the national saint, whose tomb at Compostella in the north was one of the favourite shrines visited by pilgrims.

At the head of the Christian host, when it rode across the mountains to the plain of Las Navas de Tolosa, where it was destined to fight one of the most decisive of Spanish battles, was Alfonso VIII, 'the Good', of Castile, who had warred against the Moors ever since his coronation as a lad of fifteen. With him went his allies, the King of Navarre, commanding the

right wing, and Pedro II, King of Aragon, commanding the left.

All day long the battle raged; and the Christian kings and their knights fought like heroes; but in spite of their efforts they were pressed back and defeat seemed almost certain. 'Here must we die,' exclaimed Alfonso bitterly, determined to sell his life at a high price; but Rodrigo Ximenez, the fiery Archbishop of Toledo, replied, 'Not so, Señor, here shall we conquer!' and with his cross-bearer he charged so resolutely against the foe that the Christians, rallying to save their sacred standard, drove the Moors headlong from the field. So overwhelming was the victory that the advance of the Almohades was completely checked, and the Christian states became the dominating power in the peninsula.

At first in their battles amongst themselves it had been Navarre that took the lead amongst the Christian states; but later this little mountain kingdom, that lay across the Pyrenees like a saddle and was half French in her sympathies and outlook, lost her supremacy. Spanish interest ceased to be centred in France, and focused itself instead in the lands that were slowly being recovered from the Moors. Portugal declared itself an independent kingdom, Castile broke off the yoke of Navarre and united with Leon, Aragon absorbed the important province of Catalonia, with its thriving seaport Barcelona.

One of the most famous of Aragonese heroes in the thirteenth century was James 'the Conqueror', son of Pedro II of Aragon, who during the Albigensian Crusade had died fighting on behalf of his brother and vassal, the Count of Provence, against Simon de Montfort.[1] James, who was only six at the time, was taken prisoner by the cruel Count, but Innocent III insisted that he should be handed back to his own people, and these gave him to the Templars to educate. It was natural that in such a military environment the boy should grow up a soldier; but he was to prove himself a statesman as well, and a lover of literature, writing in the Catalan dialect a straightforward, manly chronicle of his reign, and encouraging his Catalan subjects in

[1] See p. 215.

the devotion to poetry they had shared from early days with their Provençal neighbours.

According to contemporary accounts the young king was handsome beyond all ordinary standards, nearly seven feet tall, and well built in proportion. Unfortunately he was so attractive that he became thoroughly spoilt, and was dissolute in his way of life and uncontrolled in his temper. When in one of his rages he was capable of any crime, though ordinarily so generous and tender-hearted that he hated to sign a death-warrant. In his chronicle he tells us how on one of his campaigns he found a swallow had built her nest by the roundel of his tent: 'So I ordered the men not to take it down,' he says, 'until the swallow had flown away with her young, since she had come trusting to my protection.'

The combination of good looks, brains, and chivalry found in James I appealed to the imagination of the Aragonese, but still more did his fighting qualities that were typically Spanish. 'It has ever been the fate of my race', he wrote, 'to conquer or die in battle'; and when quite a small boy he made up his mind that he would become a crusader.

For many years after he was declared old enough to reign for himself King James was forced to spend his time and energy in subduing the nobles who during his long minority had been allowed to become a law unto themselves. This vindication of his authority accomplished, he led his armies against the Moors, and under his conquering banner 'Valencia of the Cid' passed finally into Christian hands.

The Moorish kingdom was now reduced to Granada in the south and the dependent province of Murcia to the north-east that was claimed by the Castilians, though Alfonso 'the Learned' of Castile was quite unable to make himself master of it.

Hearing of the Aragonese victories in Valencia, Alfonso, who was 'the Conqueror's' son-in-law, asked King James if he would help him by invading Murcia, a project that first aroused the anger of the Aragonese because it seemed to them that they were expected to do the hard work in order that some one else might reap the spoils.

King James was more far-seeing than his subjects and held a different view. The Moors were weak at the moment; but, owing to the influx of fresh warriors from North Africa, they had always been able to rally their power in the past and might do so again. 'If the King of Castile happen to lose his land I shall hardly be safe in mine,' was his shrewd summary of the case; and with this he invaded and overran Murcia, which he gave to his son-in-law in 1262.

This date, 1262, though it marked no fresh acquisition of territory for Aragon, was nevertheless an epoch in her history. Hitherto her main interest had been identical with Castile's—namely, the freedom of Spain from the infidel—but now, owing to the conquest of Murcia, she was surrounded by Christian neighbours, and what remained of the crusade had become the business of Castile alone. Early in his reign also, King James had closed another chapter in Aragonese history, when, as a result of his father's defeat and death, he had been forced to cede all Catalonian claims to Provence, and thus to put away for ever the prospect of absorbing France that had dazzled his ancestors.

Where, then, should Aragon turn her victorious arms? King James, a true Aragonese, had already answered this question, when in 1229 he began the conquest of the Balearic Islands, thus clearly recognizing that his country's natural outlook for expansion was neither north nor south, but eastwards. Already Catalan fishermen and the merchants of Barcelona were disputing the commercial overlordship of the Mediterranean with their fellows of Marseilles and the Italian Republics, and thence-forward Aragonese kings were to take a hand in the game, supporting commerce with diplomacy and the sword.

James 'the Conqueror' did not die in battle-harness, as he had predicted, but in the robe of a Cistercian monk, expiating in the seclusion of a monastery the sins of his tempestuous, pleasure-loving youth. His tradition as a warrior descended to his son Pedro III, under whose rule Aragon entered on her campaign of Italian conquests.

Both the excuse for this undertaking and the occasion have been noticed elsewhere in another connexion. The excuse was

the execution of Conradin,[1] last legitimate descendant of the Neapolitan Hohenstaufen. As he stood on the scaffold calmly awaiting his death, the boy, for he was little more, had flung his gauntlet amongst the crowd. The action spoke for itself, the one bitter word 'revenge'; and a partisan who witnessed it, kneeling swiftly, picked up the glove and bore it away to Spain. Here he presented it to Pedro III, to whose wife Constance, the daughter of an illegitimate son of Frederick II, the claims of the Italian Hohenstaufen had descended.

Pedro did not forget the glove or its message; and when the Sicilians, rising in wrath at the Easter Vespers,[2] massacred their Angevin tyrants, it was Aragonese ships that brought them succour, and Pedro who defied the anathemas of the Pope and the power of France to drive him from his new throne.

All the failures and victories of the years that followed, when Aragonese and Angevin claimants deluged 'the Kingdom' and adjoining island with blood, are more a matter of Italian than Spanish history, and it is with Castile that the interests of the peninsula become mainly concerned.

Castile in later mediaeval times consisted of some two-thirds of the whole area of Spain, stretching from the Bay of Biscay in the north to the confines of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in the south. As her name suggests, she was a land of castles, built originally, not like the strongholds of Stephen's lawless barons in England—to maintain a tyranny over the countryside—but as military outposts in each fresh stage of the reconquest from Islam. Naturally those who lived in such outposts, and might be wakened any night to take part in a border foray or to withstand a surprise attack, expected to receive special privileges in compensation. This was as it should be, and grateful Kings of Castile, in order to encourage traders as well as knights and princes to settle on their dangerous southern border, offered concessions in the form of charters and revenues with a reckless prodigality at which other European monarchs would have shuddered.

[1] See p. 195. [2] See p. 229

Trouble began when, with the steady advance of the crusading armies, outposts ceased to be outposts; and yet their inhabitants, naturally enough again, saw no reason why they should be deprived of the privileges and riches that they had won in the past. Had they known how to use their independence, when danger from the Moors diminished, in securing a government conscious of national needs and aspirations, Spain might have become the political leader of Europe. Unfortunately the average Castilian felt only a selfish sense of the advantages that liberty might afford, without realizing in the least that their possession entailed heavy responsibilities. Thus he allowed his country to degenerate into anarchy.

War seemed the natural atmosphere of life to the Castilian of pure blood, whose ancestors had all been crusaders. Unable to compete in agriculture or industry with the thrifty Moslems or Jews who remained behind on the lands that he reconquered, he decided that labour, except with the sword, was the hall-mark of slaves; and this unfortunate fallacy, widely adopted, became the ultimate ruin of Spain. It turned her from the true road of national prosperity, which can be gained only by solid work, while it prevented nobles and town representatives from understanding one another, and so rendered them incapable of common action in the 'Cortes', or national parliament. The fallacy went farther, for it made war between noble and noble seem a natural outlet for martial zeal when no Moslem force was handy on which to whet Christian swords.

The part played by the King in this land of independent crusaders and aristocratic cut-throats was difficult and precarious. Though not so legally bound by the concessions he had been forced to make as in Aragon—where no king might pass a law without the consent of his Cortes and where the 'Justiciar', a popular minister, disputed his supreme right of justice—mediaeval Castilian monarchs were in practice very much at the mercy of their subjects.

Henry II of England had been able to burn down his barons' castles and hang some of their owners, thus paving the way of royal supremacy; but kings of Castile could scarcely adopt

such drastic measures against subjects usually more wealthy than themselves, whose castles were required as national fortresses, and whose retainers formed the main part of Christian armies against the Moors. Instead, custom and circumstances seemed ever forcing the rulers of Castile to grant new liberties, and to alienate their lands and revenues in constant rewards and bribes.

This was one of the failings of Alfonso 'the Learned', who in spite of his boast, 'Had I been present at the Creation I would have arranged the world better,' was certainly not 'the Wise', as he is sometimes called. Alfonso was a great reader and a scientist in advance of his day; but the best work that he ever did for his kingdom was the publication of the *Siete Partidas* (Seven Divisions), a compilation of all the previous laws of Spain, both Roman and Gothic, drawn up and arranged in a single code. For the rest, apart from his somewhat academic cleverness, he was vain, irresolute, and superficial. On one occasion he divorced his wife; and then, when the new wife he had chosen, a Norwegian princess, had already arrived at a Spanish port, he decided to send her away and retain the old. This capriciousness was of a piece with the rest of his actions.

During the 'Great Interregnum'[1] Alfonso was one of the claimants for the imperial crown, but had neither money nor sufficient popularity to carry through this foolish project, for which he heavily overtaxed his people. He also planned an invasion of Africa in grand crusading style, but had to turn his attention instead to struggling against unruly sons. He died with little accomplished save his reputation for wisdom.

The reign of Alfonso X was a prelude to a century and a half of anarchy in Castile, a period when few of her kings could claim to be either 'wise' or 'learned', and when four of them by ill fortune ascended the throne in childhood, and so presented their nobles with extra opportunities for seeking their own ambitions at the royal expense.

On one struggle during this century and a half we have already touched—the bitter feud between Pedro 'the Cruel', the Nero of Spain, and his half-brother, Henry of Trastamara.[2] There is

[1] See p. 229. [2] See p. 247.

no end to the list of crimes of which this monster has been accused, from strangling his rival's mother, and calmly watching while his half-brother, a twin of Henry of Trastamara, was pursued and cut down unarmed by the royal guard, to ordering that the young bride with whom he had refused to live should be given poisonous herbs that she might die.

Stained, indeed, must the Black Prince have felt his honour when he discovered what a brother-in-arms he had crossed the Pyrenees to aid—one who would massacre prisoners for sheer love of butchery, burn a priest for prophesying his death, and murder an archbishop in a fit of savagery. It is probably true to describe this worst of the Spanish kings as mad: many of his atrocities were so meaningless, such obvious steps to his own downfall, because they alienated those who tried to remain loyal to his cause. His end, when it came, rejoiced the popular heart and imagination, for Pedro, according to tradition, was at last entrapped by the crafty Du Guesclin, lately released from imprisonment by the Black Prince, and once more in the service of Henry of Trastamara.

King Pedro believed that every man had a price, and, on Du Guesclin's pretence that he might be bought over, stole secretly one night to the Frenchman's tent. Here he found his hated brother with some of his courtiers who cried aloud 'Look, Señor, it is your enemy.' 'I am! I am!' screamed Pedro furiously, seeing he was betrayed, and flung himself on his brother, while the latter struck at him with his dagger. Over and over they rolled in the half-light of a tallow candle, until Pedro, who had gained the upper hand, fumbled for his poignard with which to strike a fatal blow. Then, according to the old ballad, Du Guesclin interfered. 'I neither make king nor mar king, but I serve my master,' he said, and turned Pedro over on his back, enabling those who were standing by to dispatch him with their knives. The tale, if creditable to Du Guesclin's loyalty, is hardly so to his love of fair play, but the murdered king had lived like a wild animal, and it is difficult to feel any regret that he died like one instead of in battle as a knight.

The House of Trastamara was now established on the

Castilian throne by the triumphant Henry II. Some years later it gave also a king to its eastern neighbour, when the royal House of Aragon had become extinct in the male line. This was the Infante Ferdinand, a man of mature judgement, who had already won golden opinions for his honesty and statesmanship when acting as guardian for his young nephew, John II of Castile.

Both kingdoms, but more especially Castile, were to remain victims of civil wars and of frequent periods of anarchy for another half-century. John II, deprived of his uncle's wise guidance, devoted his time to composing love-songs and surrendered his weak will to a royal favourite, Alvaro de Luna, without whose consent, tradition says, he dared not even go to bed. The result was incessant turbulence, for the nobles hated the arrogant and all-powerful upstart, who managed the court as he pleased, and steadily added to his own estates and revenues. Yet, having brought about his downfall and death, they had no better government with which to replace his tyranny.

Under John's son and successor Castile fared even worse; for Henry IV was not merely weak but vicious, so that he rolled the crown in the mire of scandal and degradation. Government of any sort was now at an end. 'Our swords', wrote a contemporary Castilian, recalling this time of nightmare, 'were employed, not to defend the boundaries of Christendom, but to rip up the entrails of our country. . . . He was most esteemed among us who was strongest in violence: justice and peace were far removed.'

In their efforts to save something of their lives and fortunes from this wreck, towns and villages formed *Hermandades* or 'brotherhoods'—that is, troops of armed men who pursued and punished criminals; but these leagues without support from the crown were not strong enough to deal with the worst offenders, the wealthy nobles, who could cover their misdeeds with lavish bribery or threats.

At this moment in Castile's history, when she had sunk to a depth from which she could not save herself, Henry IV died,

and was succeeded on the throne by his sister, Isabel, a girl in years but already a statesman in outlook and discretion. Henry IV had attempted to secure personal advantages in his lifetime by arranging various marriages for Isabel, first with a French prince, then with the King of Portugal, and finally with one of his own worthless favourites, and his sister had won his dislike by her steady refusal to agree to any of these alliances. Secretly, indeed, she had married her cousin Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Aragon, a youth already distinguished for his military abilities and shrewd common sense.

As joint rulers of Castile and Aragon Isabel and Ferdinand dominated Spain, and were able to impose their will even on the most powerful of their rebellious subjects, taking back the crown lands that had been recklessly given away, organizing a *Santa Hermandad*, or 'Holy Brotherhood', on the model of previous local efforts to ensure order, and themselves holding supreme tribunals to judge important cases of robbery and murder. In this display of authority the land not merely acquiesced but rejoiced, utterly weary of an independence the misuse of which had produced licence instead of freedom.

Thus it was that a strong monarchy, such as Louis XI was able to establish in France at the end of the Hundred Years' War, and the Tudors in England after the Wars of the Roses, was also organized and maintained in Spain. Under its despotic sway many popular liberties were lost, but peace was gained at home, and glory and honour abroad above all expectations. The perpetual crusade against the Moors had always touched the imagination of Europe—now its crowning achievement, the Conquest of Granada, dazzled their eyes with all the pageantry and pomp of victory so dear to mediaeval minds.

Hardly was this wonder told when news came that a Genoese adventurer had discovered, in the name of Isabel and Ferdinand, a Spanish empire of almost fabulous wealth beyond the Atlantic.[1] To these triumphs were added conquests in Italy, fruits of Ferdinand's Aragonese ambitions.

The glory of Spain belongs to modern not to mediaeval

[1] See p. 342.

history; but just as a man or woman is a development of the child, so this, the first nation in Europe as she became in the sixteenth century, proved the outcome of the qualities and vices of an earlier age. Above all things she became, as we should expect, a nation of warriors, inspired with ardour for the Catholic Faith, arrogant and ambitious. To her strength was added a fatal weakness bred of conceit and a narrow outlook, that is the intolerance that admired Ferdinand and Isabel's ruthless Inquisition and rejoiced in the expulsion of thousands of thrifty Jews and Moors.

Spain was a born conqueror among nations, but what she conquered she had learned neither the sympathy nor adaptability to govern. Thus the empire won by her courage and endurance was destined to slip from her grasp.

Supplementary Dates. For Chronological Summary, see pp. 368-73.

Saracen rule in Spain	711-1031
The Cid	(died) 1099
James I of Aragon	1213-76
Pedro III of Aragon	1276-85
Alfonso X of Castile	1252-84
Pedro I of Castile	1350-69
John II of Castile	1407-54
Henry IV of Castile	1454-74
Isabel I of Castile	1474-1504
Ferdinand II of Aragon	1479-1516

XX

CENTRAL AND NORTHERN EUROPE IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

THE accession of Rudolf of Habsburg[1] as King of the Romans in 1273 is a turning-point in the history of mediaeval Germany. Hitherto private or imperial ambitions had prevented even well-intentioned emperors from exerting their full strength against anarchy at home; while a few like Frederick II had deliberately ignored German interests. The result had been a steady process of disintegration, perpetuating racial and class feuds; but now at last the tradition was broken and an Emperor chosen who was willing to forgo the glory of dominating Rome and Lombardy in order to build up a nation north of the Alps.

The election itself was somewhat of a surprise; for Rudolf belonged to an obscure and far from wealthy family, owning territory in Alsace and amongst the Swiss mountains. What is interesting to the modern world is that the man who did most to influence the Electors in their choice, and thus helped to plant a Habsburg with his feet on the ladder of greatness, was a Hohenzollern.

Count Rudolf at the time of his election was a middle-aged man of considerable military experience, kindly, simple, and resolute. He had won the affection of his own vassals by helping them in their struggles against the unjust demands of local tyrants, such as feudal bishops or the barons who built castles amongst the crags and sent out armed retainers to waylay merchants and travellers. One tale records how, with an apparently small force, he advanced boldly against a robber fastness, thus encouraging the garrison to issue out and attack him. When the robbers approached, however, they found to their horror that each of their mounted opponents had another armed man seated behind

[1] See p. 229.

him, and so, hopelessly outnumbered as well as outwitted, they were forced to surrender or fly.

Rudolf needed all his military ability when he was chosen Emperor; for the most powerful ruler in central Europe at that time, King Ottocar of Bohemia, refused to recognize him, being furious that he himself had not received a single vote, while an obscure count from the Swiss mountains had been elected his master. The truth was that Ottocar was well known to be arrogant and bad-tempered, so that all the Electors were afraid of him; and there was general rejoicing when, in a battle against King Rudolf near Vienna, he was killed and the throne of Bohemia passed to his son, a boy of twelve.

This victory was the real beginning of the Habsburg fortunes; for Rudolf by the confiscation of the Austrian provinces of Carinthia, Styria, and Carniola, that had belonged to his rival, established his family as one of the great territorial powers of the Empire. Unfortunately his character seemed to deteriorate with success, and his greed for lands and power to increase with acquisition.

Instead of finding Rudolf the protector of their liberties, his sturdy Swiss vassals now had to defend themselves against his encroachments; and in the year 1291 some of them in self-defence formed what they called a 'Perpetual League', whose covenant, drawn up a few years later in a simplified form, is just as sacred a charter of liberty to the Swiss as Magna Charta to the English.

'Know, all men,' it began, 'that we, the people of the Valley of Uri, the Community of the Valley of Schwyz, and the mountaineers of the Lower Valley, seeing the malice of the times, have solemnly agreed and bound ourselves by oath to aid and defend each other with all our might and main, with our lives and property, both within and without our boundaries, each at his own expense, against every enemy whatever who shall attempt to molest us, whether singly or collectively.'

This was the first 'Confederation of the Swiss', the union of the three provinces of Uri, Schwyz, and the 'Lower Valley', or 'Unterwalden'; but Rudolf died in the same year 1291, so that the Swiss struggle for liberty really began against his son, Albert of Austria.

Rudolf, in spite of the Concordat he had made with the Pope renouncing his claims over papal territory, had never been to Italy to be crowned Emperor, so that he died merely 'King of the Romans'; and the Electors of Germany made this one of their excuses for not immediately choosing his son to succeed him.

Like Ottocar, Albert was overbearing and ambitious, and had at once on his father's death obtained possession of the entire family estates, without allowing any of them to pass to Count John of Habsburg, a son of his elder brother who had died some years before. Albert was a persistent man when he wished for anything very ardently, and, having failed to be elected Emperor a first time, he set himself to win friends and allies amongst the powerful families all over Germany. So successful was he that when a fresh imperial vacancy occurred in 1298 the choice of the Electors fell on him.

This realization of his ambitions spurred Albert's energies to fresh efforts. He was now overlord of the Empire, but on his own estates amongst the Swiss mountains his will was often disputed by citizens and peasants, who claimed to have imperial permission for their independence. As Emperor, Rudolf could withdraw privileges light-heartedly granted by predecessors who were not Habsburgs; and with this in view he sent bailiffs and stewards to govern in his name, with orders to enforce complete submission to his demands.

Concerning the events that followed, fiction has built round fact a wonderful tale, that, whether true or false in its main incidents, is characteristic of mediaeval Swiss daring, and a fit introduction to a great national struggle for liberty.

Gessler, legend tells us, was the most hated of all Albert's Austrian governors. So narrow-minded was he that he hated to see the peasants building themselves stone houses instead of living in mud hovels, and would take every opportunity of humbling and oppressing them.

Once he set up a hat on a pole in the market-place of one of the principal towns, and ordered every one who passed to salute it. A certain William Tell, either through obstinacy or carelessness, failed to do so, on which Gessler, who had found out that

he was an archer, ordered him as a punishment to shoot at long range an apple placed on his son's head. In vain the father begged for any other sentence: Gessler only laughed. Seeing that entreaty was useless, Tell took two shafts, and with one he pierced straight through the apple. Gessler was annoyed at his success and, looking at him suspiciously, asked, 'What, then, is the meaning of thy second arrow?' The archer hesitated; and not until he had been promised his life if he would answer the truth would he speak. Then he said bluntly, 'Had I injured my child my second shaft should not have missed thy heart.' There was a murmer of applause from the townsmen, but the governor was enraged at such a bold answer. 'Truly,' he shouted, 'I have promised thee life; but I will throw thee into a dungeon, where never more shall sun nor moon let fall their rays on thee.' The legend goes on to relate how, though bound and closely guarded, the gallant archer made his escape, and hiding in the bushes not far from the road where Gessler must pass to his castle, he shot him and fled. 'It is Tell's shaft,' said the dying man, as he fell from his horse. By his daring struggle against the tyrant William Tell became one of Switzerland's national heroes.

Fortunately for the Swiss, Albert was so busy as ruler of all Germany that he could not give the full attention to subduing his rebellious vassals that he would have liked; and when at last he found time to visit his own estates, just as he was almost within sight of the family castle of the Habsburgs, he was murdered, not by a peasant, but by his nephew Count John, who considered that he had been unjustly robbed of his inheritance.

The task of attempting to reduce the Swiss to submission fell on a younger son of King Albert, Duke Leopold, a youth who despised the peasants of his native valleys quite as heartily as the French their 'Jacques Bonhomme'. His army, as it wandered carelessly up the Swiss mountains, without order or pickets, resembled a hunting-party seeking a day's amusement; and on their saddles his horsemen carried bundles of rope to hang the rebels and bind together the cattle they expected to capture as spoils.

Meeting with no opposition, Duke Leopold began to ascend the frozen side of the Morgarten; and here, as he advanced between high ridges, discovered himself in a death-trap. From the heights above, the Swiss of the Forest Cantons rained a deadly fire of stones and missiles that threw the horses below into confusion, slipping and falling on the smooth surface of the track. Then there descended from all sides small bodies of peasants armed with halberds, so sure-footed amid the snow and ice that they cut down the greater part of the Duke's forces before they could extricate themselves and find safe ground.

Leopold escaped, but he rode from the carnage, according to his chronicler, 'distracted and with a face like death'. Swiss independence had been vindicated by his defeat; and round the nucleus of the forest republics there soon gathered others, bound together in a federal union that, while securing the safety of all, guaranteed to each their liberties.

Other campaigns still remained to be fought on behalf of complete Swiss independence; and one of the most important of these occurred towards the end of the fifteenth century, and was waged against a military leader of Europe, Charles, Duke of Burgundy, son and successor of that Philip 'the Good' who had played so great a part in the latter half of the Hundred Years' War.[1]

This Charles 'the Bold', sometimes called also 'the Rash' or 'the Terrible', was in many ways a typical mediaeval soldier. From his boyhood he had loved jousting—not the magnificent tourneys, in which as heir to the dukedom he could count on making a safe as well as a spectacular display of knightly courage, but real contests in which, disguised in plain armour, his strength and skill could alone win him laurels and avoid death. Strong and healthy, brave and impetuous, he loved the atmosphere of war with all its hazards and hardships. 'I never heard him complain of weariness,' wrote Philip de Commines, a French historian who was at one time in his service, 'and I never saw in him a sign of fear.'

To qualities like courage and endurance Charles added failings

[1] See p. 252.

that were often his undoing—a hot temper, impatience, and a tendency to under-estimate the wits of his opponents. His clever, ambitious brain was always weaving plans, but he did not realize that he had neither the skill nor the political vision to keep many irons in the fire without letting one get too hot or another over-cold.

Like all mediaeval rulers of Burgundy, he was faced by the problem of his middle kingdom, with its large commercial population, whose trade interests must be considered alongside his own territorial ambitions. To the rulers of both France and the Empire he was tenant-in-chief for different provinces, and either of these potentates could cause him discomfort by stirring up trouble amongst his subjects, or else unite with him to his great advantage in order to defy the authority of the other.

At first Charles tried to increase his territory in the west at the expense of Louis XI of France, and even gained some showy triumphs, but gradually he found that he was no match in diplomacy for that astute king, 'the universal spider', as a contemporary christened him; and so he turned his attention to his eastern border.

Here he discovered that a Habsburg, Sigismund of the Tyrol, had become involved in a quarrel with the Swiss Cantons, and had been forced to promise them a large sum of money that he was quite unable to pay. When Charles offered to lend him the sum required if he would hand over as security his provinces of Alsace and Breisgau, Sigismund, seeing no other alternative, reluctantly agreed. So remote was the prospect of repayment that the Duke of Burgundy at once began to rule the territories that he held in pawn as though they were his own, and might indeed have absorbed them quietly amongst his possessions had not the French 'Spider' chosen to take a hand in the game. Louis XI had never forgiven Charles for his clumsy attempts to rob him of French territory, and now, weaving a web that was to entangle the Burgundian to his ultimate ruin, he secretly pointed out to the Swiss how much more dangerous a neighbour was Charles 'the Bold' than Sigismund 'the Penniless'. Let Sigismund, he suggested, agree to withdraw all Habsburg claims

to towns and lands belonging to the Cantons, and let the Cantons in return pledge themselves to pay for the restoration of the lost provinces.

This compromise was finally arranged, and the exasperated Charles called upon to hand back the lands he already considered his own. Instead of complying he made overtures to both Louis and the Emperor, with such success that when the Swiss troops invaded Alsace in order to gain possession of that province for Sigismund, they found themselves without the powerful allies on whose support they had counted.

Charles, ever too prone to over-estimate his importance, now believed that he was in a position to crush these presumptuous burghers once and for all. With a splendidly equipped army of some fifty thousand men, and some of the new heavy artillery that had already begun to turn battle-fields into an inferno, he crossed the Jura mountains and marched towards the town of Granson, that had been occupied by the Swiss. This he speedily reduced, hanging the entire garrison on the trees without the gates as an indication of how he intended to deal with rebels, and then continued on his way, since he heard that the army of the Cantons, some eighteen thousand men in all, had gathered in the neighbourhood.

On the slopes of a vineyard he could soon see their vanguard, kneeling with arms outstretched. 'These cowards are ours,' he exclaimed contemptuously, and at once ordered his artillery to fire; for he thought that the peasants begged for mercy, whereas, believing God was on their side, they really knelt in prayer. Mown down in scores, the Swiss maintained their ground; and Charles, to tempt them from their strong position, ordered a part of his army to fall back as if in rout. This ruse his own Burgundians misunderstood, the more that at the moment they received the command they could see the main Swiss forces advancing rapidly across the opposite heights and blowing their famous war-horns. Confusion ensued, and soon, in the words of an old Swiss chronicler, 'the Burgundians took to their heels and disappeared from sight as though a whirlwind had swept them from the earth.'

Such was the unexpected victory of Granson, that delivered into Swiss hands the silken tents and baggage-wagons of the richest and most luxurious ruler in Europe. Carpets and Flemish lace, fine linen and jewellery, embroidered banners, beautifully chased and engraved weapons: these were some of the treasures, of which specimens are still to be found in the museums of the Cantons.

Charles was defeated, 'overcome by rustics whom there would have been no honour in conquering,' as the King of Hungary expressed the situation in the knightly language of the day. Such a disgrace intensified Burgundian determination to continue the war; while the Swiss on their part found their resolution hardened by the sight of the garrison of Granson hanging from the trees.

'There are three times as many of the foe as at Granson, but let no one be dismayed. With God's help we will kill them all.' Thus spoke a Swiss leader on the eve of the battle of Morat, where savage hand-to-hand fighting reduced the Burgundian infantry to a fragment and drove the Duke with a few horsemen in headlong flight from the field.

Twice defeated, a wise prince might have done well to consider terms of peace with those who, though rustics, had proved more than his equals; but Charles, a brave soldier, would not recognize that his own bad generalship had largely contributed to his disasters. He chose to believe instead in that convenient but somewhat thin excuse for failure, 'bad luck', and prophesied that his fortune would turn if he persevered.

More dubious of their ruler's ability than his fortune, the Flemings, as they grudgingly voted money for a fresh campaign, besought their Duke to make peace. His former allies, once dazzled by his name and riches, were planning to desert him: but Charles was deaf alike to hints of prudence or tales of treachery.

Near the town of Nanci he met the Swiss for a third time, and once more the famous horns, 'the bull' of Uri and 'the cow' of Unterwalden, bellowed forth their calls to victory, and the Burgundians, inspired by treachery or forebodings of defeat, turned and fled. None knew what had happened to the Duke,

until a captured page reported that he had seen him cut down as he fought stubbornly against great numbers. Later his body was discovered, stripped for the sake of its rich armour, and half-embedded in a frozen lake.

Thus fittingly died Charles 'the Rash', leaving the reputation as a warrior that he would gladly have earned to his enemies the Swiss, now regarded as amongst the invincible veterans of Europe.

The voice of freedom had spoken so loudly through the Forest Cantons that mediaeval Europe had been forced to acknowledge her claim, and elsewhere also democratic forces were openly at work. We have spoken in previous chapters of the 'Communes' of northern France and Italy, precocious in their civilization, modern in their demands for self-government. In Italy, at least, they had been strong enough to form Leagues and defeat Emperors; but commercial jealousy and class feuds had always prevented these Unions from developing into a federation.

This is true also of southern Germany, where towns like Augsburg and Nuremburg become, as the central mart for trade between Eastern and Western Europe and also between Venice, Genoa, and the lands north of the Alps, rivals in wealth and luxury of Mediterranean ports. During periods like the 'Great Interregnum', when German kingship was of no avail to preserve peace or order, it was associations of these towns that sent out young burghers to fight the robber knights that were the pest of the countryside, and to protect the merchandise on which their joint fortunes depended.

Union for obvious purposes of defence was thus a political weapon forged early in town annals; but, on the other hand, it was only slowly that burghers and citizens came to realize the advantages of permanent combination for other ends, such as commercial expansion, or in order to secure stable government.

This limited outlook arose partly from the very different stages of development at which mediaeval towns were to be found at the same moment. Some would be just struggling out of dependence on a local bishop or count by the payment of huge tolls,

at the same time that others, though enjoying a good deal of commercial freedom, were still forced to accept magistrates appointed by their neighbouring overlord. Yet again, a privileged few would be 'free' towns, entirely self-governed, and owning allegiance only to the Emperor. Perhaps a master mind could have dovetailed all these conflicting systems of government into a federation that would have helped and safeguarded the interests of all, but unfortunately the mediaeval mind was a slave to the fallacy that commercial gain can only be made at the expense of some one else.

The men of one town hated and feared the prosperity of another and were convinced that the utmost limit of duty to a neighbour was their own city walls. Nothing, for instance, is more opposed to modern codes of brotherhood than the early mediaeval opinion on the subjects of wrecks. Men and women of those days saw no incongruity in piously petitioning God in public prayer for a good wreckage, or in regarding the shipwrecked sailor or merchant cast on their rocks as prey to be knocked on the head and plucked.

The towns of North Germany shared to the full this primitive savagery, but they learned the secret of co-operation that their wealthy southern neighbours utterly missed, and in so doing became for a time a political force of world-wide fame.

Such was the commercial league of 'the Hansa', formed first of all by a few principal ports, Lübeck, Danzig, Bremen, and Hamburg, lying on the Baltic or North Sea, but afterwards increased to a union of eighty or more towns as the value of mutual support and obligations was realized.

Law in the Middle Ages was personal rather than territorial—that is to say, a man when he travelled abroad would not be judged or protected by the law of the country to which he went, but would carry his own law with him. If this law was practically non-existent, as for a German during years of anarchy when the Holy Roman Empire was thoroughly discredited in the eyes of Europe, the merchant stood a small chance of safeguarding himself and his wares.

It was here, when emperors and kings of the Romans failed,

that the Hanseatic League stepped in, maintaining centres in foreign towns where the merchants of those cities included in the League could lodge and store their goods, and where permanent representatives of the League could make suit to the government of the country on behalf of fellow merchants who had suffered from robbery or violence.

As early as the tenth century German traders had won privileges in English markets, for we find in the code of Ethelred 'the Rede-less' the following statement: 'The people of the Emperor have been judged worthy of good laws like ourselves.'

Later, 'steelyards,' or depots somewhat similar to the Flemish 'staple-towns', were established for the convenience of imperial merchants; and owing to the energy of the Hanseatic League these became thriving centres of commerce, respected by kings of England if jealously disliked by their subjects.

Protection of the merchants belonging to 'the Hansa' while in foreign countries soon represented, however, but a small part of the League's duty towards those who claimed her privileges. The merchant must travel safely to his market by land and sea; but in North Germany he had not merely to fear robber knights but national foes: the hostile Slav tribes that attacked him as he rode eastwards to the famous Russian market of Nijni-Novgorod to negotiate for furs, tallow, and fats: or even more dangerous Scandinavian pirates who sought to sink his vessel as he crossed the Baltic or threaded the Danish isles.

One of the chief sources of Hanse riches was the fishing industry, since the law that every Christian must abstain from meat during the forty days of Lent, and on the weekly Friday fast, made fish a necessity of life even more in the Middle Ages than in modern times. Now the cheapest of all fish for anxious housekeepers was the salted herring, and as the herring migrated from one ocean-field to another it made and unmade the fortune of cities. From the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the fifteenth century it chose the Baltic as a home of refuge from the North Sea whales, and in doing so built the prosperity of Lübeck, just as it broke that prosperity when it swam away to the coasts of Holland.

For two months every year the North German fishermen cast nets for their prey as it swept in millions through the narrow straits past the coast of Skaania; but here lay trouble for 'the Hansa', since Skaania, one of the southernmost districts of modern Sweden, was then a Danish province, and the Danes, who were warriors rather than traders, hated the Germans heartily.

NOTE. U. = Untervaldan The Empire is shaded

In early mediaeval times we have noticed Scandinavia as the home of Norse pirates; as the mother of a race of world-conquerors, the Normans; under Cnut, who reigned in England, Norway, and Denmark, as an empire-builder. The last ideal was never quite forgotten, for as late as the Hundred Years' War King Valdemar III of Denmark planned to aid his French ally by invading England; but the necessary money was not forthcoming, and other and more pressing political problems intervened and stopped him.

Valdemar inherited from his Norse ancestors a taste for piracy that he pursued with a restless, unscrupulous energy very tiring to his people. Sometimes it brought him victory, but more often disaster, at least to his land. 'In the whole kingdom', says a discontented Dane, 'no time remained to eat, to repose, to sleep--no time in which people were not driven to work by the bailiffs and servants of the King at the risk of losing his royal favour, their lives, and their goods.' Because of his persistence Valdemar was nicknamed 'Atterdag', or 'There is another day': his boast being that there was always time to return to any task on completing which he had set his heart.

Valdemar's chief ambition was to make Denmark the supreme power in northern Europe, and in endeavouring to achieve this object he was always forming alliances with Norway and Sweden that broke down and plunged him into wars instead. The Hanse towns he hated and despised, and in 1361, moved by this enmity, he promised his army that 'he would lead them whither there was gold and silver enough, and where pigs ate out of silver troughs'. His allusion was to Wisby, the capital of Gothland, that under the fostering care and control of North German merchants had become the prosperous centre of the Baltic herring-fishery. Under Valdemar's unexpected onslaught the city, with its forty-eight towers rising from the sea, was set on fire and sacked.

Since Gothland was a Swedish island, vengeance for this insult did not legally rest with the Hansa, but, recognizing that the blow had been aimed primarily at her trade, she sent a fleet northwards to co-operate with the Swedes and Norwegians. This led to one of the greatest disasters that ever befell the Hanseatic League, for her allies did not appear, and her fleet, being outnumbered, was beaten and destroyed.

Valdemar, delighted with his success, determined to reduce the North Germans to ruin, and continued his policy of aggression with added zest; but in this he made a political mistake. Many of the towns, especially those not on the Baltic, were apathetic when the struggle with the Danish king began: they did not wish to pay taxes even for a victory, and angrily

repudiated financial responsibility for defeat. It was only as they became aware, through constant Danish attacks, that the very existence of the League was at stake, that a new public opinion was born, and that it was decided at Cologne in 1367 to reopen a campaign against King Valdemar, towards which every town must contribute its due.

'If any city refuse to help', ran the announcement of the meeting's decisions, 'its burghers and merchants shall have no intercourse with the towns of the German "Hansa", no goods shall be bought from them or sold to them, they shall have no right of entry or exit, of lading or unlading, in any harbour.'

The result of the League's vigorous policy was entirely successful, and compelled the unscrupulous Valdemar, who found himself shortly in an awkward corner, to collect all the money that he could and depart on a round of visits to the various courts of Europe. He left his people to the fate he had prepared for them, and during his absence Copenhagen was sacked, and the Danes driven to conclude the Treaty of Stralsund that placed the League in control of all the fortresses along the coast of Skaania for fifteen years.

The Hansa had now acquired the supremacy of the Baltic, and because the duty of garrisoning fortresses and patrolling the seas required a standing army and navy, the League of northern towns did not, like those in South Germany, Italy, or France, melt away as soon as temporary safety was achieved. Each city continued to manage its own affairs, but federal assemblies were held, where questions of common taxation and foreign policy were discussed, and where those towns that refused to abide by decisions previously arrived at were 'unhansed', that is, deprived of their privileges.

Even Emperors, who condemned leagues on principle from old Hohenstaufen experience, respected if they disliked 'the Hansa' that carried through national police-work in the north of which they themselves were quite incapable.

The Emperor Charles IV, when he visited Lübeck, addressed the principal civic officials as 'My lords!' and when, suspicious of this flattery, they demurred, he replied, 'You are lords indeed,

for the oldest imperial registers know that Lübeck is one of the five towns that have accorded to them ducal rank in the imperial council.' The chronicler adds proudly that thus Lübeck was acknowledged the equal of Rome, Venice, Florence, and Pisa.

In the latter half of the fourteenth century the Hanseatic League stood at the height of its power; for though the political genius of Queen Margaret, daughter of Valdemar III, succeeded in uniting Denmark, Norway, and Sweden by the agreement called 'the Union of Kalmar', and also forced the Hansa to surrender the fortresses on the Skaania coast; yet even the foundation of this vast Scandinavian Empire could not shake German supremacy over the Baltic. Under Margaret's successors the Union of Kalmar degenerated into a Danish tyranny; and because it was the result of a dynastic settlement and not of any national movement it soon came to shipwreck amid general discontent and civil wars.

The Hanseatic League itself, though it lingered on as a political force through the fifteenth century, gradually declined and lost touch with the commercial outlook of the age. The decline may be traced partly to the fact that there was no vigorous national life in Germany to feed the League's vitality, but also to a steady tendency for towns to drift apart and become absorbed in the local interests of their provinces.

The real blow to the prestige of the League was, however, the departure of the herring-shoals from the Baltic to the coasts of Amsterdam. 'The Hansa' had concentrated its commercial interests in the Baltic, and when the Baltic failed her she found herself unable to compete with the Dutch and English traders, who were already masters of the North Sea.

Other and more adventurous rivals were opening up trade routes along the African coast and across the Atlantic; but the Hanseatic League, with her rigid and limited conception of commercial interests, was like a nurse still holding by the hand children that should have been able to fend for themselves. Once the protection of her merchants, she had degenerated into a check on individual enterprise, and so, belonging to the spirit of the Middle Ages, with the Middle Ages passed away.

Another mediaeval institution, destined also to decline and finally vanish, was a close ally of the Hanseatic League, namely, the Order of Teutonic Knights. Transferred, as we have noticed,[1] on the fall of the Latin Empire in Asia Minor to the shores of the Baltic, the Order had there justified its existence by carrying on a perpetual war against the heathen Lithuanians and Prussians, building fortresses and planting colonies of German settlers, as Charlemagne and his Franks had set the example.

While there still remained heathen to conquer the Knights were warmly encouraged by the Pope, and their battle-fields were a popular resort for the chivalry of nearly every country in Europe, competing in their claim with the camps of Valencia, Murcia, and Granada.

Nearer home the Order found less favour. In Poland, for instance, that had at first welcomed the Knights as a bulwark against northern barbarism, the unpleasant knowledge gradually dawned that the crusaders, by securing the territory of Livonia, Curland, and Prussia, had cut her off from a lucrative sea-trade.

Poland was the most easterly of those states that in mediaeval times owned a nominal allegiance to Holy Roman Emperors. She had received her Christianity from Rome, and was thus drawn into the network of western life—unlike Russia, or the kingdom of Rus as it was called, that was converted by missionaries from Constantinople, and whose princes and dukes were subject to Mongol overlords in Siberia from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century.

The Poles were brave, intensely devoted to their race, persistent in their enmities, and in none more than in their dislike of the German Knights, whose military genius and discipline had so often thwarted their ambitions. Quarrels and wars were continuous, but the most mortal wound dealt by the Poles was the result not of a victory but of a marriage alliance.

In 1387, soon after the death of Louis 'the Great', who had been King of both Hungary and Poland, the Poles offered their

[1] See p. 151.

crown to Duke Jagello of Lithuania, on the condition that he would marry one of Louis's daughters and become a Christian. The temptation of a kingdom soon overcame Jagello's religious scruples, so that he cast away his old gods and was baptized as Ladislas V, becoming the founder of the Jagellan dynasty, that continued on the thrones of Poland and Lithuania right through the Middle Ages.

The conversion of the Lithuanians, who, whatever their beliefs, were driven at the spear-point to accept Jagello's new faith, completely undermined the position of the Teutonic Order that, surrounded by Christian neighbours, had no longer a crusade to justify its claims. Popes ceased to send their blessing to the Grand Master, and talked instead of the possibilities of suppression; while tales of immorality and avarice such as had pursued the Templars were everywhere whispered into willing ears.

Within their own territory also the influence of the Knights was waning; for the very nature of their vows made their rule merely a military domination; and, once the fear of heathen invasion had been removed, German colonists began to resent this. Condemned to celibacy, the Knights could train up no hereditary successors in sympathy from childhood with the needs of the Baltic province; but, as they grew old and died, they must yield place instead to recruits from distant parts of Germany, who could only learn anew by their own experience the manners and traditions of those whom they governed.

In the stress of these new conditions the good work that the Teutonic Order had done in saving North Germany from barbarism was forgotten. Weakened by disaffection within her own state, she fell an inevitable victim to Polish enmity, and at the battle of Tannenberg her Grand Master and many of her leading Knights were slain. The daring and determination of those who remained prevented the full fruits of this victory from being reaped until 1466, when, by the Treaty of Thorn, Poland received the whole of western Prussia, including the important town of Danzig, that gave her the long-coveted control of the Vistula and a Baltic seaport, beside hemming her enemies into the narrow strip of eastern Prussia.

Poland's southern neighbour was the kingdom of Hungary, with which she had been for a short time united under Louis 'the Great', 'the Banner-bearer of the Church' as he was styled by a grateful Pope for his victories over the Mahometans. Besides fighting against the Turks, Louis had other military irons in the fire. One of his ambitions was to dominate Eastern Europe, and with this object he was continually attacking and weakening the Serbian Empire, that appeared likely to be his chief rival. He also fought with the Venetians for the mastery of the Dalmatian coast, while we shall see in a later chapter that he aimed at becoming King of Naples on the murder of his brother Prince Andrew, husband of Joanna I.

So successful was Louis in his war against the Venetians that he was able to take from them Dalmatia and exact the promise of a large yearly tribute. This in itself was achievement enough to win him a reputation in Europe, for the 'Queen of the Adriatic' was a difficult foe to humble; but Louis also gained public admiration by his enlightened rule. Recognizing how deeply his land was scarred by racial feuds, such as those of the Czechs and Magyars, that have carried their bitterness far into modern times, he set himself to think out equitable laws, which he endeavoured to administer with impartial justice, instead of favouring one race at the expense of another. He also made his court a centre of culture and learning, where his nobles might develop their wits and manners as well as their sword-arms.

One of the chief supporters of Louis in this work of civilization was the Emperor Charles IV, whom we have noticed paying compliments to the citizens of Lübeck. The friendship lasted for several years, until some of the princes of the Empire, weary of Charles's rule, began to compare the two monarchs, one so sluggish, the other a military hero, and to suggest that the overlord should be deposed in favour of the famous King of Hungary. Louis indignantly repudiated this plot; but Charles, who would hardly have done the same in a like case, could not bring himself to believe him, and in his anger began petulantly to abuse the Queen Mother of Hungary, to whom he knew her son was devoted. This led to recriminations, and finally to a war, in

which Charles was so thoroughly beaten that he sued for peace; and outward friendship was restored by the marriage of the Emperor's son, Sigismund of Luxemburg, with Louis's daughter Mary.

When Louis died, Poland, that had never wholeheartedly submitted to his rule, gave itself, as we have seen, to King Jagello of Lithuania; while the Hungarians, after some years of anarchy, chose Sigismund of Luxemburg as their king.

The House of Luxemburg was in the later Middle Ages the chief rival of the Habsburgs, and provided the Empire with some of her most interesting rulers. One of these, the Emperor Henry VII, belongs to an earlier date than that with which we have just been dealing, for he was grandfather of Charles IV. He was a gallant and chivalrous knight, who, but for his unfortunate foreign policy, might have proved himself a good and wise king.

Dante, the greatest of Italian poets, who lived in the days of Henry VII, made him his hero, and hoped that he would save the world by establishing a Ghibelline supremacy that would reform both Church and State. It was Henry VII's undoing that he believed with Dante that he had been called to this impossible mission; and so he crossed the Alps to try his hand at settling Italian feuds. Germany saw him no more; for soon after his coronation at Rome he fell ill and died, poisoned, it is said, in the cup of wine given him by a priest at Mass.

Discord now broke out in Germany, and it was not till 1348 that another of the House of Luxemburg was chosen King of the Romans. This was Charles IV, a man of a very different type of mind to his grandfather. For Charles Italy had no lure: he only crossed the Alps because he realized that it increased the prestige of the ruler of Germany to be crowned as Emperor by the Pope, and he did not mind at all that he was received without any pomp or respect, only with suspicion and begging demands. As soon as the ceremony was over he hastened back to his own kingdom, turning a deaf ear to all Italian complaints and suggestions.

This hurried journey was certainly undignified for a world-Emperor; but Charles, who had run away in his youth from the battle-field of Creci, was never a heroic figure. Neither the thought of glory nor of duty could stir his sluggish blood; but as far as obvious things were concerned he had a good deal of common sense. At any rate, in sharing Rudolf I's conviction that Germany should come first in his thoughts he was wiser than his heroic grandfather.

To the reign of Charles IV belongs the 'Golden Bull', a document so called from its *bulla* or seal. The 'Golden Bull' set forth clearly the exact method of holding an imperial election. Hitherto much of the trouble in disputed elections had arisen because no one had been sure of the correct procedure, and so disappointed candidates, by arguing that something illegal had occurred, were able to refuse allegiance to the successful nominee. Now it was decided that there should be seven Electors—three archbishops and four laymen—and that the ceremony should always take place at Frankfort, the minority agreeing to be bound by the will of the majority.

Besides these main clauses the 'Golden Bull' secured to the seven Electors enormous privileges and rights of jurisdiction, thus raising them to a much higher social and political level than the other princes of Germany, who were merely represented in the Imperial Diet or Parliament. The Electors became, in fact, more influential than the Emperor himself, and Charles has often been blamed for handing over Germany to a feudal oligarchy.

It is possible that he did not foresee the full results or permanence of the 'Golden Bull', but was determined only to construct for the time being a workable scheme that would prevent anarchy. There is also the supposition that he was more interested in the position of the kingdom of Bohemia, his own hereditary possession, which he raised to the first place among the electing territories, than in the rôle of Emperor to which he had been chosen. Whatever Charles's real motive, it is at any rate clear that he had the sense to see that the Empire as it stood was an outworn institution, and thus to try and mould it

into a less fantastic form of government. Like Edward I of England and Philip IV of France, though without the genius of the one or the opportunities of the other, he stands for posterity as one of those rulers of Europe during whose reign their country was enabled to shake off some of its mediaeval characteristics. Charles wore the imperial crown longer than any of his predecessors without arousing serious opposition—a sign that, if not an original politician, he yet moved with his times towards a more Modern Age.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

The Perpetual League	1291	Ladislas V of Poland	1386-1433
Charles 'the Bold'	1433-77	Treaty of Thorn	1466
Valdemar III	1340-75	Emperor Henry VII	1308-13

XXI

ITALY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

When the 'Company of Death' repulsed the German army of Frederick Barbarossa on the field of Legnano[1] it raised aloft before the eyes of Europe not only the banner of democracy but also of nationality. Others, as we have seen, followed these banners once displayed: the Swiss Cantons shook off the Habsburg yoke: the Flemish towns defied their counts and French overlords: the Hanse cities formed political as well as commercial leagues against Scandinavia: France, England, and Spain emerged, through war and anarchy, modern states conscious of a national destiny.

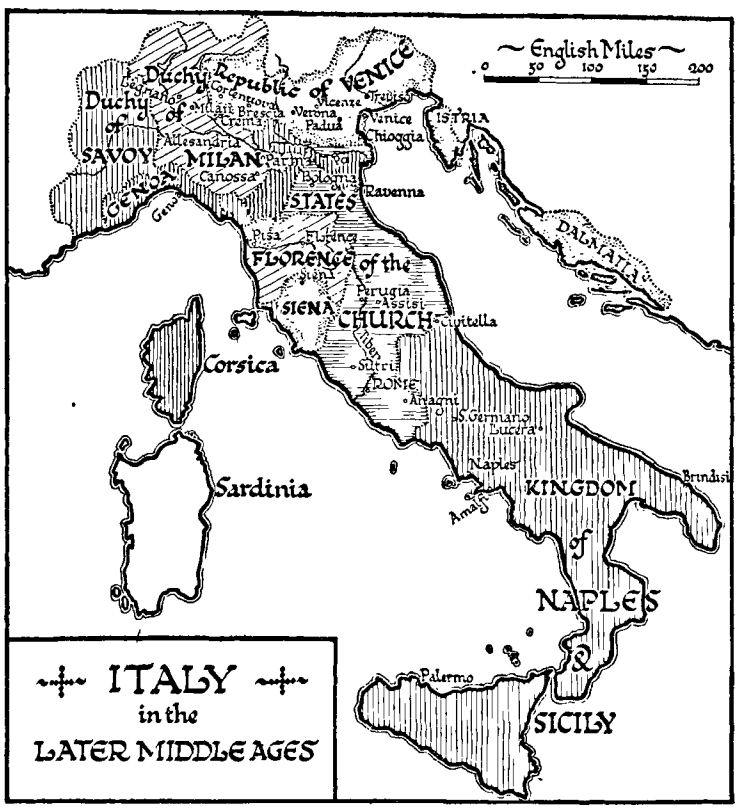
This slow evolution of nations and classes is the history of the later Middle Ages; but in Italy there is no steady progress to record; rather, a retrogression that proves her early efforts to secure freedom were little understood even by those who made them.

Frederick II had ruled Lombardy in the thirteenth century through tyrants; but, long after the Hohenstaufen had disappeared, and the quarrels of Welfs and Waiblingen had dwindled into a memory in Germany, the feuds of Guelfs and Ghibellines were still a monstrous reality in towns south of the Alps, where petty despots enslaved the Communes and reduced the country to perpetual warfare.

At length from this welter of lost hopes and evil deeds there emerged, not Italy a nation, but five Italian states of pre-eminence in the peninsula, namely, Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rome. Each was more jealous of the other than of foreign intervention, so that on the slightest pretext one would appeal to France to support her ambitions, another to

[1] See p. 179.

Spain or the Empire, and yet a third to Hungary or the Greeks. If Italy, as a result, became at a later date 'the cockpit of Europe', where strangers fought their battles and settled their



fortunes, it was largely her lack of any national foresight in mediaeval times that brought on her this misery.

The history of Milan, first as a Commune fighting for her own liberty and destroying her neighbour's, then as the battle-ground of a struggle between two of her chief families, and finally as the slave of the victor, is the tale of many a north Italian

town, only that position and wealth gave to the fate of this famous city a more than local interest.

The lords of Milan in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were the Visconti, typical tyrants of the Italy of their day, quick with their swords, but still more ready with poison or a dagger, profligate and luxurious, patrons of literature and art, bad enemies and still worse friends, false and cruel, subtle as the serpent they so fittingly bore as an emblem. No bond but fear compelled their subject's loyalty, and deliberate cruelty to inspire fear they had made a part of their system.

Bernabò Visconti permitted no one but himself to enjoy the pleasures of the chase; but for this purpose he kept some five thousand savage hounds fed on flesh, and into their kennels his soldiers cast such hapless peasants as had accidentally killed their lord's game or dared to poach on his preserves.

No sense of the sanctity of an envoy's person disturbed this grim Visconti's sense of humour, when he demanded of messengers sent by the Pope with unpleasant tidings whether they would rather drink or eat. As he put the question he pointed towards the river, rushing in a torrent beneath the bridge on which he stood, and the envoys, casting horrified eyes in that direction, replied, 'Sir, we will eat.' 'Eat this, then,' said Bernabò sternly, handing them the papal letter with its leaden seals and thick parchment, and before they left his presence the whole had been consumed.

Galeazzo Visconti, an elder brother of Bernabò, bore an even worse reputation for cruelty. Those he condemned to death had their suffering prolonged on a deliberate programme during forty-one days, losing now an eye, and now a foot or a hand, were beaten, forced to swallow nauseous drinks, and then, when the agony could be prolonged no further, broken on the wheel. The scene of this torture was a scaffold set in the public gaze that Milan might read what was the anger of the Visconti and tremble.

The most famous of this infamous family was Gian Galeazzo, son of Galeazzo, a youth so timid by nature that he would shake and turn white at the sudden closing of a door, or at a noise in

the street below. His uncle, Bernabò, believed him half-witted, and foolishly accepted an invitation to visit him after his father's death, intending to manage the young man's affairs for him and to keep him in terrified submission. The wily old man was to find himself outmatched, however, for Gian Galeazzo came to their meeting-place with an armed guard, arrested his uncle, and imprisoned him in a castle, where he died by slow poison.

After this Gian Galeazzo reigned alone in Milan, with no law save his ruthless ambition; and by this and his skill in creating political opportunities, and making use of them at his neighbour's expense, he succeeded in stretching his tyranny over the plains of Lombardy and southwards amongst the hill cities of Tuscany. Near at home he beat down resistance by force of arms, while farther away he secured by bribery or fraud the allegiance of cities too weak to stand alone, yet less afraid of distant Milan than of Venice or Florence that lay nearer to their walls.

It was Gian Galeazzo's aim to found a kingdom in North Italy, and he went far towards realizing his project, stretching his dominion at one time to Verona and Vicenza at the very gates of Venice, while in the south he absorbed as subject-towns Pisa and Siena, the two arch-enemies of Florence. This territory, acquired by war, bribery, murder, and fraud, he persuaded the Emperor to recognize as a duchy hereditary in his family, and at once proceeded to form alliances with the royal houses of Europe. The marriage of his daughter Valentina with the young and weak-minded Duke of Orleans, brother of the French king, though hardly an attractive union for the bride, proved fraught with importance for the whole of Italy, since at the very end of the fifteenth century, Louis, Duke of Orleans, a grandson of Valentina Visconti, succeeded to the French crown as Louis XII, and also laid claim to the duchy of Milan, as a descendant of the Visconti.[1]

At first sight it seems strange that any race so cruel and unprincipled as the Visconti should continue to maintain their tyranny over men and women naturally independent like the inhabitants of North Italy. Certainly, if their rulers had been

[1] See Genealogical Table, p. 379.

forced to rely on municipal levies they would not have kept their power even for a generation; but unfortunately the old plan of expecting every citizen of military age to appear at the sound of a bell in order to defend his town had practically disappeared. Instead the professional soldier had taken the citizen's place—the type of man who, as long as he received high wages and frequent booty, did not care who was his master, nor to what ugly job of carnage or intimidation he was bidden to bring his sword.

This system of hiring soldiers, *condottieri*, as they were called in Italy, had arisen partly from the laziness of the townsmen themselves, who did not wish to leave their business in order to drill and fight, and were therefore quite willing to pay volunteers to serve instead of them. Partly it was due to the reluctance of tyrants to arm and employ as soldiers the people over whom they ruled. From the point of view of the Visconti, for instance, it was much safer to enrol strangers who would not have any patriotic scruples in carrying out a massacre, or any other orders equally harsh.

For such ruffians Italy herself supplied a wide recruiting-ground, namely, the numberless small towns, once independent but now swallowed up by bigger states, who treated the conquered as perpetual enemies to be bullied and suppressed, allowing them no share in the government nor voice in their future destiny. Wide experience has taught the world that such tyranny breeds merely hatred and disloyalty, and the continual local warfare from which mediaeval Italy suffered could be largely traced to the failure to recognize this political truth. With no legitimate outlet for their energies, the young men of the conquered towns found in the formation of a company of adventurers, or in the service of some prince, the only path to renown, possibly a way of revenge.

To Italian *condottieri* were added German soldiers whom Emperors visiting Italy had brought in their train, and who afterwards remained behind, looking on the cities of Italy as a happy hunting-ground for loot and adventure. Yet a third source of supply were freebooters from France, released by one of the

truces of the Hundred Years' War, and hastily sent by those who had employed them to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Amongst those who came to Italy in the fourteenth century, and built for himself a name of terror and renown, was an English captain, Sir John Hawkwood, the son of an Essex tailor, knighted by Edward III for his prowess on the battle-fields of France. Here is what a Florentine chronicler says of him:

'He endured under arms longer than any one, for he endured sixty years: and he well knew how to manage that there should be little peace in Italy in his time .... For men and Communes and all cities live by peace, but these men live and increase by war, which is the undoing of cities, for they fight and become of naught. In such men there is neither love nor faith.'

One tale of the day records how some Franciscans, meeting Sir John Hawkwood, exclaimed as was their custom, 'Peace be with you.' To their astonishment he answered, 'God take away your alms.' When they asked him the reason for wishing them so ill, he replied, 'You also wished that God might make me die of hunger. Know you not that I live on war, and that peace would ruin me? I therefore returned your greeting in like sort.'

Sir John Hawkwood spent most of his time in the service of Florence; and, whatever his cruelty and greed, he does not seem to have been as false as other captains of his time. Indeed, when he died, the Florentines buried him in their cathedral, and raised an effigy in grateful memory of his deeds on behalf of the city.

Returning to the history of Milan and her *condottieri*, Gian Galeazzo, though timid and unwarlike himself, was a shrewd judge of character, and his captains, while they struck terror into his enemies, remained faithful to himself. When he died in 1402, however, many of them tried to establish independent states; and it was some years before his son, Filippo Maria, could master them and regain control over the greater part of the Duchy.

Even more cowardly than his father, Filippo Maria lived, like Louis XI of France, shut off from the sight of men. Sismondi, the historian, describes him as 'a strange, dingy, creature, with

protruding eyeballs and furtive glance'. He hated to hear the word 'death' mentioned, and for fear of assassination would change his bedroom every night. When news was brought him of defeat he would tremble in the expectation that his *condottieri* might desert him: when messengers arrived flushed with victory he was scarcely less aghast, believing that the successful general might become his rival.

Such was the penalty paid by despots, save by those of iron nerve, in return for their luxury and power: the dread that the most servile of *condottieri* might be bribed into a relentless enemy, poison lurk in the seasoned dish or wine-cup, a dagger pierce the strongest mesh of a steel tunic. So night and day was the great Visconti haunted by fear, while his hired armies forced Genoa to acknowledge his suzerainty, and plunged his Duchy into rivalry with Venice along the line of the River Adige.

The history of Venice differs in many ways from that of other Italian states. Built on a network of islands that destined her geographically for a great sea-power, she had looked from earliest times not to territorial aggrandisement, but to commercial expansion for the satisfaction of her ambitions. In this way she had avoided the strife of feudal landowners, and even the Guelf and Ghibelline factions that had reduced her neighbours to slavery.

Elsewhere in Italy the names of cities and states are bound up with the histories of mediaeval families; Naples with the quarrels of Hohenstaufen, Angevins, and Aragonese: Rome with the Barons of the Campagna, the Orsini and Colonna: Milan with the Visconti, and later with the Sforza: Florence with the Medici: but in Venice the state was everything, demanding of her sons and daughters not the startling qualities and vices of the successful soldier of fortune, but obedience, self-effacement, and hard work.

The Doge, or Duke, the chief magistrate of Venice, has been compared to a king; but he was in reality merely a president elected for life, and that by a system rendered as complicated as possible in order to prevent wire-pulling. Once chosen and

presented to the people with the old formula, 'This is your Doge an' it please you!' the new ruler of the city found himself hedged about by a hundred constitutional checks, that compelled him to act only on the well-considered advice of his six Ducal Councillors, forbade him to raise any of his family to a public office or to divest himself of a rank that he might with years find more burdensome than pleasant. He was also made aware that the respect with which his commands were received was paid not to himself but to his office, and through his office to Venice, a royal mistress before whom even a haughty aristocracy willingly bent the knee.

In early days all important matters in Venice were decided by a General Assembly of the people; but as the population grew, this unwieldy body was replaced by a 'Grand Council' of leading citizens. In the early fourteenth century another and still more important change was made, for the ranks of the Grand Council were closed, and only members of those families who had been in the habit of attending its meetings were allowed to do so in future. Thus a privileged aristocracy was created, and the majority of Venetians excluded from any share in their government; but because this government aimed not at the advantage of any particular family but of the whole state, people forgave its despotic character. Even the famous Council of Ten that, like the Court of Star Chamber under the Tudors, had power to seize and examine citizens secretly, in the interests of the state, was admired by the Venetians over whom it exerted its sway, because of its reputation for even-handed justice, that drew no distinctions between the son of a Doge, a merchant, or a beggar. 'The Venetian Republic', says a modern writer on mediaeval times, 'was the one stable element in all North Italy,' and this condition of political calm was the wonder and admiration of contemporaries.

Sometimes to-day it seems difficult to admire mediaeval Venice because of her selfishness and frank commercialism. She had no sense of patriotism either towards Italy or Christendom; witness the Fourth Crusade,[1] where nothing but her insistent

[1] See p. 184.

desire to protect her trading position in the East had influenced her diplomacy.

This accusation of selfishness is true; but we must remember that the word 'patriotism' has a much wider scope in modern times than was possible to the limited outlook of the Middle Ages. Venice might be unmoved by the words 'Italy' or 'Christendom', but the whole of her life and ideals was centred in the word 'Venice'. Her sailors and merchants, who laid the foundations of her greatness, were no hired mercenaries, but citizens willing to lay down their lives for the Republic who was their mother and their queen. Thus narrowing the term 'patriotism', we see that of all the Italian Powers Venice alone understood what the word meant, in that her sons and daughters were willing to sacrifice as a matter of course not merely life but family ambitions, class, and even individuality to the interests of their state.

The ambitions of Venice were bound up with the shipping and commerce that had gained for her the carrying-trade of the world. To take, for example, the wool manufacture, of such vital interest to English and Flemings, we find that at one time this depended largely on Venetian merchants, who would carry sugar and spices to England from the East, replace their cargo with wool, unload this in its turn in the harbours of Flanders, and then laden with bales of manufactured cloth return to dispose of them in Italian markets.

Besides the carrying-trade, which depended on her neighbour's industry, Venice had her own manufactures such as silk and glass; but in either case both her sailors and workmen found one thing absolutely vital to their interests, namely, the command of the Adriatic. Like the British Isles to-day, Venice could not feed her thriving population from home-produce, and yet, with enemies or pirates hiding along the Dalmatian coast, safety for her richly-laden vessels passing to and fro could not be guaranteed. These are some of the reasons why from earliest times the Republic had embarked on an aggressive maritime policy that brought her into clash with other Mediterranean ports, and especially with Genoa, her rival in Eastern waters.

When, at the end of the Fourth Crusade, Venice forced Constantinople to accept a Latin dynasty, she secured for herself for the time being especial privileges in that world-market; Genoa, who adopted the cause of the exiled Greeks, achieved a signal triumph in her turn when in 1261 with her assistance Michael Paleologus, a Greek general, restored the Byzantine Empire amid public rejoicings.

Open warfare was now almost continuous between the republics; there was street-fighting in Constantinople and in the ports of Palestine, sea-battles off the Italian and Greek coasts, encounters in which varying fortunes gave at first the mastery of the Mediterranean to neither Venice nor Genoa, but which disastrously weakened the whole resistance of Christendom to the Mahometans.

At length in 1380 a decisive battle was fought off Chioggia, one of the cities of the Venetian Lagoons, whither the Genoese fleet, triumphant on the open seas, had taken up its quarters determined to blockade the enemy into surrender. 'Let us man every vessel in Venice and go and fight the foe', was the general cry; and a popular leader, Pisani, imprisoned on account of his share in a recent naval disaster, was released on the public demand and made captain of the enterprise. 'Long live Pisani!' the citizens shouted in their joy, but their hero, true to the spirit of Venice, answered them, 'Venetians cry only, "Long live St. Mark!"'

With the few ships and men at his disposal, Pisani recognized that it was out of the question to lead a successful attack; but he knew that if he could defer the issue there was a Venetian fleet in the eastern Mediterranean which, learning his straits, would return with all possible speed to his aid. He therefore determined to force the enemy to remain where they were without offering open battle, and this manœuvre he carried out with great boldness and skill, sinking heavy vessels loaded with stones in the channels that led to Chioggia, while placing his own fleet across the main entrance to prevent Genoese reinforcements. The blockaders were now blockaded; and through long winter days and nights the rivals, worn out by their bitter vigil, starving

and short of ammunition, watched one another and searched the horizon anxiously. At length a shout arose, for distant sails had been sighted; then as the Venetian flag floated proudly into view the shout of Pisani and his men became a song of triumph: the Republic was saved. Venice was not only saved from ruin, her future as Queen of the Adriatic was assured, for the Genoese admiral was compelled to surrender, and his Republic to acknowledge her rival's supremacy of the seas.

The sea-policy of Venice was the inevitable result of her geographical position; but as the centuries passed she developed a much more debatable land-policy. Many mediaeval Venetians declared that since land was the source of all political trouble, therefore Venice should only maintain enough command over the immediate mainland to secure the city from a surprise attack. Others replied that such an argument was dictated by narrow-minded prejudice, a point of view suitable to the days when Lombardy had been divided amongst a number of weak city-states, but impracticable with powerful tyrants, such as the Visconti, masters of North Italy. Unless Venice could secure the territories lying at the foot of the Alps, and also a wide stretch of eastern Lombardy, she would find that she had no command over the passes in the mountains by means of which she carried on her commerce with Germany and Austria.

The advocates of a land-empire policy received confirmation of their warnings when in the early part of the fourteenth century Mastino della Scala, lord of Vicenza, Padua, and Treviso, attempted to levy taxes on Venetian goods passing through his territories. The Republic, roused by what she considered an insult to her commercial supremacy, promptly formed a league with Milan and Florence against Mastino, and obtained Treviso and other towns as the result of a victorious war.

This campaign might, of course, be called merely a part of Venice's commercial policy, defence not aggression; but later, in 1423, the Florentines persuaded the Republic to join with them in a war against the Visconti, declaring that they were weary of struggling alone against such tyrants, and that if Venice did not help them they would be compelled to make

Filippo Maria 'King of North Italy.' The result of the war that followed was a treaty securing Venice a temporary increase of power on the mainland, and may be taken as the first decisive step in her deliberate scheme of building up a land-empire in Italy.

Machiavelli, a student of politics in the sixteenth century, who wrote a handbook of advice for rulers called *The Prince*, as well as the history of Florence, his native city, declares that the decline of the Venetians 'dated from the time when they became ambitious of conquests by land and of adopting the manners and customs of the other states of Italy'. This may be true; but it is doubtful whether the great Republic could have remained in glorious isolation with the Visconti knocking at her gates.

From Venice we must turn to Florence, which, by the fifteenth century, emerged from petty rivalries as the first city in Tuscany. Like Milan, Florence fell a prey to Guelfs and Ghibellines; but these feuds, instead of becoming a family rivalry between would-be despots, developed into a bitter class-war.

On the fall of Frederick II the Guelfs, who in Florence at this date may be taken as representing the *populo grasso*, or rich merchants, as opposed to the *grandi*, or nobles, succeeded in driving the majority of their enemies out of the city. They then remodelled the constitution in their own favour.

The chief power in the city was now the 'Signory', composed of the 'Gonfalonier of Justice' and a number of 'Priors', representatives of the *arti*, or guilds of lawyers, physicians, clothiers, &c.: to name but a few. No aristocrat might stand for any public office unless he became a member of one of the guilds, and in order to ensure that he did not merely write down his name on their registers it was later enacted that every candidate for office must show proof that he really worked at the trade of the guild to which he claimed to belong.

Other and sterner measures of proscription followed with successive generations. The noble who injured a citizen of lesser rank, whether on purpose or by accident, was liable to have his house levelled with the dust: the towers, from which in old days his ancestors had poured boiling oil or stones upon

their rivals, were reduced by law to a height that could be easily scaled; in the case of a riot no aristocrat, however innocent his intentions, might have access to the streets. The *grande* was, in fact, both in regard to politics and justice, placed at such an obvious disadvantage that to ennoble an ambitious enemy was a favourite Florentine method of rendering him harmless.

The Guelf triumph of the thirteenth century did not, in spite of its completeness, bring peace to Florence. New parties sprang up; and the government in its efforts to keep clear of class or family influence introduced so many complicated checks that great injury was done to individual action, and all hope of a steady policy removed. Members of the 'Signory', for instance, served only for two months at a time: the twelve 'Buonomini', or 'Good men', elected to give them advice only for six. What was most in contrast to the ideal of 'the right man for the right job' was the practice of first making a list of all citizens considered suitable to hold office, then putting the names in a bag, and afterwards picking them out haphazard as vacancies occurred. Even this precaution against favouritism—and, one is inclined to add, also against efficiency—was checked by another law, the summoning of a *parlamento* in cases of emergency. This *parlamento* was an informal gathering of the people collected by the ringing of a bell in the big square, where it was then asked to decide whether a special committee should be appointed with free power to alter the existing constitution. Politicians argued that here in the last resort was a direct appeal to the people, but in reality by placing armed men at the entrances to the square a docile crowd could be manœuvred at the mercy of any mob-orator set up by those behind the scenes.

Power remained in Florence in the hands of the prosperous burghers and merchants, and these in time developed their own feuds under the names of 'Whites' and 'Blacks', adopted by the partisans in a family quarrel.

The greatest of Italian poets, Dante Alighieri, was a 'White', and was exiled from his city in 1302 owing to the triumph of his

rivals. When pardon was suggested on the payment of a large sum of money, Dante, who had tried to serve his city faithfully, refused to comply, feeling that this would be an open acknowledgement of his guilt. 'If another way can be found . . . which shall not taint Dante's fame and honour', he wrote proudly, 'that way I will accept and with no reluctant steps . . . but if Florence is not to be entered by any such way never will I enter Florence.'

Dante's mental outlook was typical of mediaeval times in its stern prejudices and hatreds, but it was also clearer and nobler in its scope. An enthusiastic Ghibelline in politics, he believed that it was the first duty of Holy Roman Emperors to exert their authority over Italy, but this vision was not narrowed, as with many Italians, into the mere hope of restoration to home and power, with a sequel of revenge on private enemies. Dearer to Dante than any personal ambitions was the desire for the salvation of both Church and state from tyranny and corruption; and this he believed could only be achieved by bestowing supreme power on a world-emperor.

One attempt at reform had been made in 1294, when the conclave of Cardinals, suddenly stung with the contrast between the character of the Catholic Church and its professions, chose as their Vicar a hermit noted for his privations and holy life. Celestine V, as he was afterwards called, was a small man, pale and feeble, with tousled hair and garments of sackcloth. When a deputation of splendidly dressed cardinals came to find him, he fled in terror, and it was almost by force that he was at last persuaded to go with them and put on the pontifical robes. The men and women who longed for reform now waited eagerly for this new Pope's mandates; but their expectations were doomed to failure. Celestine V had neither the originality nor the strength of will to withstand his change of fortunes. Terrified by his surroundings, he became an easy prey to those who were unscrupulous and ambitious, giving away benefices sometimes twice over because he dared not refuse them to importunate courtiers, and creating new cardinals almost as fast as he was asked to do so. At last he was allowed to abdicate,

and hurried back to his cell, but only to be seized by his successor, the fierce Boniface VIII,[1] and shut up in a castle, where he died.

Dante hated Boniface as a ruler who debased his spiritual opportunities in order to obtain material rewards, but he had hardly less scorn for Celestine V, who was given power to reform the Church of Christ and 'made the great refusal'. Reform, in the Florentine's eyes, could not be looked for from Rome, but, when the Emperor Henry VII crossed the Alps,[2] his hopes rose high that here at last was the saviour of Italy, and it is probable that at this time the poet wrote his political treatise called the *De Monarchia*, embodying his views. He himself went out to meet his champion, but Henry was not destined to be a second Charlemagne or Otto the Great, and his death closed all expectations built on his chivalrous character and ideals.

Dante's greatest work is his long poem the *Divina Commedia*, divided into three parts, the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. It tells how on Good Friday of the year of Jubilee 1300 the Florentine, meeting with the spirit of Virgil whom he had chosen as his master, was led by him through the realms of everlasting punishment and of penance, and from there was borne by another guide, Beatrice, the idealized vision of a woman he had loved on earth, up through the 'Nine Heavens' to the very throne of God. As a summary of mediaeval theories as to the life eternal, and also as the reflection of a fourteenth-century mind on politics of the day, the *Divine Comedy* is indeed an historical treasury as well as a masterpiece of Italian literature. It is, however, a great deal more—the revelation of the development of a human soul. Dante's journey is told with a mastery of atmosphere and detail that holds our imaginations to-day with the sense of reality. It was obviously still more real to himself and expresses the agonized endeavour of a soul, alive to the corruption and nerve-weariness of the world around him, to find the way of salvation, a pilgrimage crowned at last by the realization of a *Civitas Dei* so supreme in its beauty and peace as to surpass the prophecies of St. Augustine.

[1] See p. 230. [2] See p. 294.

Now 'Glory to the Father, to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit' rang aloud
Throughout all Paradise; that with the song
My spirit reel'd, so passing sweet the strain.
And what I saw was equal ecstasy:
One universal smile it seemed of all things;
Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;
Imperishable life of peace and love;
Exhaustless riches and unmeasured bliss.

Dante himself did not live to fulfil his earthly dream of returning to Florence, but died at Ravenna in 1321. On his tomb is an inscription in Latin containing the words, 'Whom Florence bore, the mother that did little love him'; while his portrait has the proud motto so typical of his whole life, 'I yield not to misfortune'. In later centuries Florence recalled with shame her repudiation of this the greatest of her sons; but while he lived, and for some years after his death, political prejudices blinded her eyes. In the Emperor Henry VII, to whom Dante referred as 'King of the earth and servant of God', Florence saw an enemy so hateful that she was willing to forgo her boasted democracy, and to accept as master any prince powerful enough to oppose him. Thus she granted the *Signoria*, or 'overlordship' of the city, for five years to King Robert of Naples, the head of the Guelf party in Italy during the early years of the fourteenth century.

King Robert of Naples was a grandson of Charles, Count of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, and, true to the tradition of his house, stood as the champion of the Popes against imperial claims over Italy. Outwardly he was by far the most powerful of the Italian princes of his day; but in reality he sat uneasily on his throne. The Neapolitans had not learned with time to love their Angevin rulers, but even after the death of Conradin remembered the Hohenstaufen, and envied Sicily that dared to throw off the French yoke and give herself to a Spanish dynasty..

It is difficult to provide a short and at the same time connected account of the history of Naples from the death of King Robert

in 1343 until 1435, when it was conquered by the House of Aragon. For nearly a century there is a dismal record of murders and plots, with scarcely an illuminating glimpse of patriotism or of any heroic figure. It is like a 'dance of death', with ever-changing partners, and nothing achieved save crimes and revolutions.

King Robert's successor was a granddaughter, Joanna I, a political personage from her cradle, and married at the age of five to a boy cousin two years her senior, Andrew of Hungary, brother of Louis the Great. We cannot tell if, left to themselves, this young couple, each partner so passionate and self-willed, could have learned to work together in double harness. What is certain is that no one in that corrupt court gave them the chance, one party of intriguers continually whispering in Joanna's ear that as queen it was beneath her dignity to accept any interference from her husband, while their rivals reminded the young Prince Andrew that he was descended from King Robert's elder brother, and therefore had as great a right to the throne as his wife. Frequent quarrels as to whose will should prevail shook the council-chamber, and then at last came tragedy.

In 1345 Joanna and Andrew, then respectively eighteen and twenty, set out together into the country on an apparently amicable hunting-expedition. As they slept one night in the guest-room of a convent the Prince heard himself called by voices in the next room. Suspecting no harm he rose and went to see which of his friends had summoned him, only to find himself attacked by a group of armed men. He turned to re-enter the bedroom, but the door was locked behind him. With the odds now wholly against him, Andrew fought bravely for his life, but at length two of his assassins succeeded in throwing a rope round his neck, and with this they strangled him and hung his body from the balcony outside.

Attendants came at last, and, forcing the door, told Joanna of the murder; on which she declared that she had been so soundly asleep that she had heard nothing, though she was never able to explain satisfactorily how in that case the door of her bedroom had become locked behind the young king. Naturally the

greater part of Europe believed that she was guilty of connivance in the crime, and King Louis of Hungary brought an army to Italy to avenge his brother's death. He succeeded in driving Joanna from Naples, which he claimed as his rightful inheritance, but he was not sufficiently supported to make a permanent conquest, and in the end he was forced to hurry away to Hungary, where his throne was threatened, leaving the question of his sister-in-law's guilt to be decided by the Pope.

The Pope at this time looked to the Angevin rulers of Naples as his chief supporters, and at once proclaimed Joanna innocent. It is worthy of note that three princes were found brave enough to become her husband in turn; but, though four times married, Joanna had but one son, who died as a boy.

At first she was quite willing to accept as her heir a cousin, Charles of Durazzo, who was married to her niece, but soon she had quarrelled violently with him and offered the throne instead to a member of the French royal house, Louis, Duke of Anjou. This is a very bewildering moment for students of history, because it introduces into Italian politics a second Angevin dynasty only distantly connected with the first, yet both laying claim to Naples and waging war against one another as if each belonged to a different race.

Joanna in the end was punished for her capriciousness, for in the course of the civil wars she had introduced she fell into the hands of Charles of Durazzo, who, indignant at his repudiation, shut her up in a castle, where she died. One report says that she was smothered with a feather-bed; another that she was strangled with a silken cord—perhaps in memory of Prince Andrew's murder.

After this act of retribution, Charles of Durazzo maintained his power in Naples for four years, though he was forced to surrender the County of Provence to his Angevin rival. Not content with his Italian kingdom, he set off with an army to Hungary as soon as he heard of the death of Louis the Great, hoping to enforce his claims on that warrior's lands. Instead he was assassinated, and succeeded in Naples by his son Ladislas, a youth of fifteen.

Ladislas proved a born soldier of unflagging energy and purpose, so that he not only conquered his unruly baronage but made himself master of southern Italy, including Rome, from which with unusual Angevin hostility he drove the Pope. Here was a chance for bringing about the union of Italy under one ruler, and Ladislas certainly aimed at such an achievement, but apart from his military genius he was a typical despot of his day—cruel, unscrupulous, and pleasure-seeking as the Visconti—and when he died, still a young man, in 1414 few mourned his passing.

His sister, Joanna II, who succeeded him, lacked his strength while exhibiting many of his vices. Like Joanna I she was false and fickle; like Joanna I she had no direct heirs, so that the original House of Anjou in Naples came to an end when she died. Many negotiations as to her successor took place during the latter years of her reign, and for some time it seemed as if the old queen would be content to accept Louis III of Anjou, at this time the representative of the Second Angevin House, but in a moment of caprice and anger she suddenly bestowed her favour instead on Alfonso V of Aragon and Sicily, and adopted him as her heir. Of course, being Joanna, she again changed her mind; but, though Alfonso pretended to accept his repudiation, the hard-headed Spaniard was not to be turned so easily from an acquisition that would forward Aragonese ambitions in the Mediterranean.

Directly Joanna II died, Alfonso appeared off Naples with a fleet, and though he was taken prisoner in battle and sent as a prisoner to Filippo Maria Visconti at Milan, he acted with such diplomacy that he persuaded that despot, hitherto an ally of the Angevins, that it was much safer for Milan to have a Spanish rather than a French House reigning in Naples. This was the beginning of a firm alliance between Milan and Naples, for Alfonso, released from his captivity, succeeded in establishing himself in 'the Kingdom', where withdrawing his court from Aragon he founded a new capital that became a centre for learned and cultured Italians as of old in the days of Frederick II.

We have dealt now with four of the five principal Italian states during the later Middle Ages. In Rome, to pick up the political threads, we must go back to the effects of the removal of the papal court to Avignon in 1308.[1]

From the point of view of the Popes themselves, many of them Frenchmen by birth, there were considerable advantages to be gained by this change—not only safety from the invasions of Holy Roman Emperors aspiring to rule Italy, but also from the turbulence of Roman citizens and barons of the Campagna.

Avignon was near enough to France to claim her king's protection, but far enough outside her boundaries to evade obedience to her laws. It stood in the County of Provence, part of the French estates of the Angevin House of Naples, but during her exile Joanna I, penniless and in need of papal support, was induced to sell the city, and it remained an independent possession of the Holy See until the eighteenth century.

From the immediate advantages caused by the 'Babylonish Captivity', as these years of papal residence in Avignon were called, we turn to the ultimate disadvantages, and these were serious. Inevitably there was a lowering of papal prestige in the eyes of Europe. In Rome, that since classic times had been the recognized capital of the Western world, the Pope had seemed indeed a world-wide potentate, on whom the mantle both of St. Peter and of the Caesars might well have fallen. Transferred to a city of Provence he shrank almost to the measure of a petty sovereign.

During the Hundred Years' War, for instance, there was widespread grumbling in England at the obedience owed to Avignon. The Popes, ran popular complaint, were more than half French in political outlook and sympathy, so that an Englishman who wished for a successful decision to his suit in a papal law-court must pay double the sums proffered by men of any other race in order to obtain justice. What was more, he knew that any money he sent to the papal treasury helped to provide the sinews of war for his most hated enemies.

The Papacy had been disliked across the Channel in the days

[1] See p. 232.

of Innocent IV, when England was taxed to pay for wars against the Hohenstaufen: now, more than a century later, grumbling had begun to crystallize in the dangerous shape of a resistance not merely to papal supremacy, but to papal doctrine on which that supremacy was based. Thus Wycliffe, the first great English heretic, who began to proclaim his views during the later years of Edward III's reign, was popularly regarded as a patriot, and his sermons denouncing Catholic doctrine widely read and discussed.

In the thirteenth century it had been possible to suppress heresy in Languedoc; but in the fourteenth century there were no longer Popes like Innocent III who could persuade men to fight the battles of Avignon, and so the practice of criticism and independent thought grew, and by the fifteenth century many of the doctrines taught by Wycliffe had spread across Europe and found a home in Bohemia.

With the history of Bohemian heresy we shall deal later, but, having treated its development as partly arising from the change in papal fortunes, we must notice the effect of the Babylonish Captivity on Rome herself, and this, indeed, was disastrous.

'The absence of the Pope', says Gregorovius, a modern German historian, 'left the nobility more unbridled than ever; these hereditary Houses now regarded themselves as masters of Rome left without her master. Their mercenaries encamped on every road; travellers and pilgrims were robbed; places of worship remained empty. The entire circumstances of the city were reduced to a meaner level. No prince, nobleman, or envoy of a foreign power, any longer made his appearance . . . . Vicars replaced the cardinals absent from their titular churches, while the Pope himself was represented in the Vatican, as by a shadow, by some bishop of the neighbourhood, Nepi, Viterbo, or Orvieto.'

The wealth and pomp that had made the papal court a source of revenue to the Romans were transferred to Provence: the Orsini and Colonna battled in the streets with no High Pontiff to hold them in check. Only his agents remained, who were there mainly to collect his rents and revenues, so that the city seemed once again threatened with political extinction as when Constantine had removed his capital to the Bosporus.

One short period of glory there was in seventy years of gloom—the realized vision of a Roman, Cola di Rienzi, a youth of the people, who, steeped in the writings of classical times, hoped to bring back to the city the freedom and greatness of republican days. From contemporary accounts Rienzi had a wonderful personality, striking looks, and an eloquence that rarely failed to move those who heard him. At Avignon, as a Roman envoy, he gained papal consent to some measures earnestly desired at Rome, and this success won him a large and enthusiastic following amongst the citizens, who applauded all that he said, and offered to uphold his ambitions with their swords.

The first step to the greatness of Rome was obviously to restore order to her streets, and Rienzi therefore determined to overthrow the nobles, who with their retainers were always brawling, and above all the proud family of Colonna, one of whom without any provocation had killed his younger brother in a fit of rage.

The revolution took place in May 1347, when, with the Papal Vicar standing at his side, and banners representing liberty, justice, and peace floating above his head, Rienzi proclaimed a new constitution to the populace, and invested himself as chief magistrate with the title of 'Tribune, Illustrious Redeemer of the Holy Roman Republic'.

At first there was laughter amongst the Roman nobles when they heard of this proclamation. 'If the fool provokes me further,' exclaimed Stephen Colonna, the head of that powerful clan, 'I will throw him from the Capitol'; but his contempt was turned to dismay when he heard that a citizen army was guarding the bridges, and confining the aristocratic families to their houses. In the end Stephen fled to his country estates, while the younger members of his household came to terms with the Tribune, and swore allegiance to the new Republic.

Rienzi was now triumphant, and his letters to all the rulers of Europe announced that Rome had found peace and law, while he exhorted the other cities of Italy to throw off the yoke of tyrants and join a 'national brotherhood'.

It would seem that Rienzi alone of his contemporaries saw a

vision of a united Italy; but unfortunately the common sense and balance that are necessary to secure the practical realization of a visionary's dreams were lacking. The Tribune was undoubtedly great, but not great enough to stand success. The child of peasants, he began to boast that he was really a son of the Emperor Henry VII, and the pageantry that he had first employed to dazzle the Romans grew more and more elaborate as he himself became ensnared by a false sense of his own dignity. Clad in a toga of white silk edged with a golden fringe, he would ride through the streets on a white horse, amid a calvacade of horsemen splendidly equipped. In order to celebrate his accession to power he instituted a festival, where, amid scenes of lavish pomp, he was knighted in the Lateran with a golden girdle and spurs, after bathing in the porphyry font in which tradition declared that Constantine had been cleansed from leprosy.

The people, as is the way with crowds, clapped their hands and shouted while the trumpets blew, and they scrambled for the gold Rienzi's servants threw broadcast; but long afterwards, when they had forgotten the even-handed justice their Tribune had secured them, they remembered his foolish extravagance and display, and resented the taxes that he found it necessary to impose in order to maintain his government and state.

The history of Rienzi's later years is a tale of brilliant opportunities, created in the first place by his genius, and then lost by his timidity or lack of balance. On one occasion, when he learned that the very nobles who had sworn on oath to uphold his constitution were plotting its overthrow, he invited the leaders of the conspiracy to a banquet, arrested them, and sent them under guard to prison. The next morning the prison-bell tolled, and the nobles within were led out apparently to the death their treachery had richly deserved. At the last moment, however, when each had given up hope, the Tribune came before the scaffold, and, after a sermon on the forgiveness of sins, ordered those who were condemned to be set free.

If he had wished to win their allegiance by this act of clemency Rienzi had ill-judged his enemies. They had disliked him before as a peasant upstart; now they hated him far more bitterly as a

man who had been able to humble them in the public gaze, believing, whether rightly or wrongly, that it was not forgiveness but fear of the powerful families to which they belonged that had finally moved him to mercy. From this moment the Orsini, the Colonna, and their friends had but one object in life—to pull the Tribune from his throne. By bribery and the spreading of false rumours they set themselves to undermine his influence, telling tales everywhere of his extravagance and luxury as contrasted with the heavy taxes, until at last in 1354 a tumult broke out in the city, and a mob collected that stormed the palace where Rienzi lodged, shouting 'Death to the Traitor!' As the Tribune attempted to escape he was seen against the flames of his burning walls and cut down.

With the fall of Rienzi died the idea of a restored and reformed Italy through the medium of a Holy Roman Republic, just as Dante's hope of a new and more perfect Roman Empire had been shattered by the death of Henry VII. Was there then no hope for Italy in mediaeval minds? The next answer that there was hope, indeed, came from Siena, one of the hill towns not far south of Florence, and its author was a peasant girl, Catherine Benincasa, who, like Jeanne d'Arc, looking round upon the misery of her country, believed that she was called by God to show her fellow countrymen the way of salvation.

St. Catherine, for she was afterwards canonized, was one of the twenty-five children of a Sienese dyer, who was at first very angry that his daughter refused to marry and instead joined the Order of Dominican Tertiaries—that is, of women who, still remaining in their own homes, bound themselves by vows to obey a religious rule.

In time, not only the dyer but all Siena came to realize that Catherine possessed a mind and spirit far above ordinary standards, so that, while in her simplicity she would accept the meanest household tasks, she had yet so great an understanding of the larger issues of life that she could read the cause of each man or woman's trouble who came to her, and suggest the remedy they needed to give them fresh courage or hope.

During an outbreak of plague in Siena it was Catherine who,

undismayed and tireless, went everywhere amongst the sick and dying, infusing new heart into the weary doctors and energy into patients succumbing helplessly to the disease.

When one of the wild young nobles of the town was condemned to death according to the harsh law of the day for having dared to criticize his government, Catherine visited him in prison. She found him raging up and down his cell like some trapped wild animal, refusing all comfort; but her presence and sympathy brought him so great a sense of peace and even of thanksgiving that he went to the scaffold at last joyfully, we are told, calling it 'the holy place of justice'. Here, not shrinking from the scene of death itself, Catherine awaited him, kneeling before the block, and received his head in her lap when it was severed from his body. 'When he was at rest,' she wrote afterwards, showing what the strain had been, 'my soul also rested in peace and quiet.'

St. Catherine was not alarmed when ambassadors from other cities, and even messengers from the Pope at Avignon, came to ask her advice on thorny problems. She believed that she was a messenger of God, 'servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ', as she styled herself in her letters, and that God intended the regeneration of Italy to be brought about neither by Emperor, nor by a Holy Roman Republic, but by the Pope himself. No longer must he live at Avignon, but return to Rome, and, once established there, begin the work of reform so sorely needed both by Church and State. Then would follow a call to the world that, recognizing by his just and generous acts that he was indeed the 'Father of Christendom', would joyfully come to offer its allegiance.

This high ideal touched the hearts and imaginations of even the least spiritual of Catherine's contemporaries. One of her letters was addressed to that firebrand Sir John Hawkwood, whom she besought to turn his sword away from Italy against the Turks; and it is said that on reading it he took an oath that if other captains would go on a crusade he would do so also.

St. Catherine herself went to Avignon and saw Pope Gregory XI—a timid man, who loved luxury and peace of mind, fearing greatly the turbulence of Rome. At this time all the barons of

the Campagna and most of the cities on the papal estates were up in arms, and Gregory had been warned that unless he went in person to pacify the combatants he was likely to lose all his temporal possessions. Catherine, when consulted, told him sternly that he should certainly return to Italy, but not for this reason.

'Open the eyes of your intelligence,' she said, 'and look steadily at this matter. You will then see, Holy Father, that... it is more needful for you to win back souls than to reconquer your earthly possessions.'

In January 1377 St. Catherine gained her most signal triumph, for Gregory XI, at her persuasion, appeared in Rome and took up his quarters there, so bringing to an end the 'Babylonish Captivity'. Not long afterwards he died; and the Romans who had rejoiced at his coming were overwhelmed with fear that his successor might be a Frenchman and return to Avignon. 'Give us a Roman!' they howled, surging round the palace where the College of Cardinals, or Consistory, as it was called, was holding the election; and the cardinals, believing that they would be torn in pieces unless they at least chose an Italian, hastily elected a Neapolitan, the Archbishop of Bari, who took the name of Urban VI.

It was an unfortunate choice. Urban honestly wished to reform the Church, but of Christian charity, without which good deeds are of no avail, he possessed nothing. Arrogant, passionate, and fierce in his frequent hatreds, blind to either tact or moderation, he tried to force the cardinals by threats and insults into surrendering their riches and pomp. 'I tell you in truth,' exclaimed one of them, when he had listened to the Pope's first fiery denunciations, 'you have not treated the Cardinals to-day with the respect they received from your predecessors. If you diminish our honour we shall diminish yours.'

Rome was soon aflame with the plots of the rebellious college, whose members finally withdrew from the city, declared that they had been intimidated in their choice by the mob, that the election of Urban was therefore invalid, and that they intended to appoint some one else. As a result of this new conclave there

appeared a rival Pope, Clement VII, who after a short civil war fled from Italy and took up his residence at Avignon.

The period that followed is called the Great Schism, one of the times of deepest humiliation into which the papal power ever descended. From Rome and Avignon two sets of bulls, claiming divine sanction and the necessity of human obedience, went forth to Christendom, their authors each declaring himself the one lawful successor of St. Peter, and Father of the Holy Catholic Church.

With Clement VII sided France, her ally Scotland, Spain, and Naples; with Urban VI, Germany, England, and most of the northern kingdoms; and when these Popes died the cardinals they had elected perpetuated the schism by choosing fresh rivals to rend the unity of the Church. Thus in the struggle for temporal supremacy reform was forgotten, and the growing spirit of doubt and scepticism given a fair field in which to sow her seed.

St. Catherine had realized her desire, the return of the Pope to Rome, only, we see, to find it fail in achieving the purpose for which she had prayed and planned. The Popes of the fourteenth century were men of the age in which they lived, not great souls like the saint of Siena herself, who called them to a task of which they were spiritually incapable. With her death her ideal faded, and another gradually took shape in the minds of men, namely, 'an appeal from the Vicar of Christ on earth to Christ Himself, residing in the whole body of the Church'.

Christendom remembered that in the early days of her history it had been Councils of the Fathers, sitting at Nicea and elsewhere, that had defined the Faith and made laws for the Catholic Church. Now it was suggested that once more a large world-council should be called from every Catholic nation, composed of Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, the Heads of the Friars and of the Monastic and Military Orders, together with Doctors of Theology and Law. This council was to be given power by the whole of Christendom to end the schism, condemn heresy, and reform the Church.

The person who was chiefly responsible for the summoning of this council, that met at Constance in 1414, was Sigismund, King of the Romans, a son of the Emperor Charles IV, and brother and heir to the Emperor Wenzel, a drunken sot, who was also King of Bohemia, but quite incapable of playing an intelligent part in public affairs. Sigismund was King of Hungary by election and through his marriage with a daughter of Louis the Great[1]; but his subjects had little respect for his ability, and were usually in a state of chronic rebellion. In spite of the fact that he had no money and had been decisively and ingloriously defeated in battle by the Turks, he continued to hold high ambitions, desiring above all things to appear as the arbiter of European destinies who would reform both Church and State.

The Council of Constance gave him his opportunity, and certainly no other man worked as hard to make it a success. Sometimes he presided in person at the meetings, which dragged out their weary discussions for about four years: at other times he would visit the courts of Europe, trying to persuade rival Popes to resign, or, if they were obstinate, civil sovereigns to refuse them patronage and protection. He even tried, though in vain, to act as mediator in the Hundred Years' War, in order that the political quarrels of French and English might not bring friction to the council board.

It is unfortunate for Sigismund's memory that his share in the Council of Constance was marred by treachery. As heir to the throne of Bohemia and the incapable Wenzel he was often led to interfere in the affairs of that kingdom, and felt it his duty to take some steps with regard to the spread of Wycliffe's doctrines amongst his future subjects, especially in the national University of Prague. Here heretical views were daily expounded by a clever priest and teacher, John Huss. Now the orthodox Catholics in the university were mainly Germans, and hated by the ordinary Bohemians, who were Slavs, and these therefore admired and followed Huss for national as well as from religious convictions.

Sigismund agreed with Huss in desiring a 'drastic reform

[1] See p. 294. and genealogy, p. 380.

of the Church, suitable means for ensuring which he hoped to see devised at Constance. At the same time he trusted that the representatives of Christendom would come to some kind of a compromise with the Bohemian teacher on his religious views, and persuade him by their arguments to withdraw some of his most unorthodox opinions. With this end in view he therefore invited Huss to appear at the Council, offering him a safe-conduct.

Many of the Bohemians suspected treachery and shook their heads when their national hero insisted that he was bound in honour to make profession of his faith when summoned. 'God be with you!' exclaimed one, 'for I fear greatly that you will never return to us.' This prophecy was fulfilled; for Huss, when he arrived at Constance, found that Sigismund was absent, and the attitude of the Council definitely hostile to anything he might say. After a prolonged examination he was called upon to recant his errors, and, refusing to yield, was condemned to death as a heretic; Sigismund, on his return to Constance shortly after this sentence had been passed, was persuaded that unless he consented to withdraw his safe-conduct the whole gathering would break up in wrath.

Herod, he was told, had made a bad oath in agreeing to fulfil the wish of Herodias's daughter and should have refused her demand for the head of John the Baptist. To pledge faith to a heretic was equally wrong, for as an example and warning to Christendom all heretics should be burned. It was imperative therefore for the good of the Church that such a safe-conduct should be withdrawn. Sigismund at last sullenly yielded, conscious of the stain on his honour, yet still more fearful lest the council he had called together with so great an effort should melt away, its tasks unfulfilled, as his many enemies hoped.

In July 1415 Huss was burned alive, crying aloud with steadfast courage as those about him urged him to recant, 'Lo! I am prepared to die in that truth of the Gospel which I taught and wrote.' Lest he should be revered as a martyr, the ashes of Huss were flung into the river, his very clothes destroyed; but measures that had prevailed when an Arnold of Brescia

preached to a few, some two centuries before, were unavailing when a John Huss died for the faith of a nation. Sigismund kept his council together, but he paid for his broken word in the flame of hatred that his accession in 1419 aroused in Bohemia, and which lasted during the seventeen years of what are usually called the Hussite Wars.

The Council of Constance had condemned heresy: it succeeded in deposing three rival popes, and by its united choice of a new pope, Martin V, it put an end to the long schism that had divided the Church. The question of reform, the most vital of all the problems discussed, resulted in such controversy that men grew weary, and it was postponed for settlement to another council that the new pope pledged himself to call in five years.

Such were the practical results of the first real attempt of the Church to solve the problems of mediaeval times, not by the decision of one man, whether pope or emperor, but by the voice of Christendom at large. If the attempt failed the difficulties in the way were so great that failure was inevitable.

The Conciliar Movement was modern in the sense that it was an appeal to the judgement of the many rather than of a single autocrat; but it proved too mediaeval in actual construction and working for the growing spirit of nationality that brought its prejudices and misunderstandings to the council hall. English and French, Germans and Bohemians, Italians and men from beyond the Alps, were too mutually suspicious, too assured of the righteousness of their own outlook, to be able to sacrifice their individual, or still more their national, convictions to traditional authority. The day for world-rule, as mediaeval statesmen understood the term, had passed; and the Council of Constance was a witness to its passing.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

Dante Alighieri	1265–1321	St. Catherine of Siena	1347–80
King Robert of Naples	1309–43	Pope Gregory XI	1371–8
Joanna I „ „	1343–82	„ Urban VI	1378–89
Ladislas „ „	1386–1414	„ Clement VII	1378–94
Joanna II „ „	1414–35	Pope Martin V	1417–31

XXII

PART I. THE FALL OF THE GREEK EMPIRE

THE final failure of Christendom to preserve Eastern Europe from the infidel may be traced back to the disastrous Fourth Crusade[1] in the thirteenth century, when Venice, for purely selfish reasons, drove out the Greek rulers of Constantinople, and helped to establish a Latin or Frankish Empire. This Empire lasted for fifty-seven years, weak in its foundation, and growing ever weaker like a badly built house, ready to tumble to the ground at the first tempest. It pretended to embrace all the territory that had belonged to its predecessors, but many of the feudal landowners whom it appointed were never able to take possession of their estates that remained under independent Greek or Bulgarian princes, while in Asia Minor the exiled Greek emperors ruled at Nicea, awaiting an opportunity to cross the Bosporus and effect a triumphant return.

Michael Paleologus, to whom the opportunity came, was an unscrupulous adventurer who, on account of his military reputation, had been appointed guardian of the young Emperor of Nicea, John Ducas, a boy of eight. Taking advantage of this position, Michael drove from the court all whom he knew to be disinterested partisans of his charge, and then declared himself joint emperor with the child. This ambitious claim was but a step to worse deeds, for before he was ten years old the unhappy little Emperor had been blinded and thrust into a dungeon by his co-emperor's orders, and the Paleologi had become the reigning house of the Eastern Empire.

This was an evil day for Christendom, for though Michael Paleologus beat down the resistance of all the Greek princes who dared to resent the way in which he had usurped the throne, and afterwards succeeded in entering Constantinople, yet neither he

[1] See p. 184.

nor his descendants were the type of men to preserve what he had gained. Nearly all the Paleologi were weak and false: Michael himself so shifty in his dealings that his friends trusted him less than his enemies. Because he had won his throne by fraud and cruelty he was always suspicious, like Italian despots, lest one of his generals should turn against him and outwit him.

Instead, therefore, of keeping his attention fixed on the steadily increasing power of the Mahometans, an inspection that would have warned a wise man to maintain a strong army along the borders of the Empire in Asia Minor, he was so afraid of his own Greek troops that, once established in Constantinople, he disbanded whole regiments, and exiled their best officers. Everything he did, in fact, was calculated merely to secure his immediate safety or advantage, with no thought for the future, so that he died leaving his kingdom an easy prey to foreign enemies strong enough to seize the advantage.

Besides the misrule of Michael Paleologus, other factors were at work, busily undermining the restored Greek Empire. For one thing, the Greek and Bulgarian princes, who had obtained independence when the Latins ruled in Constantinople, had no intention of returning to their old allegiance; while here and there were feudal states, like the Duchy of Athens, established by the Latins and still held by them, although the Frankish Emperor who had been their suzerain had disappeared. The islands in the Aegean Sea were most of them in Venetian hands, and Venice took care that the Greek Empire, whose fleet she had swept from the Mediterranean in the thirteenth century, should not construct another sufficiently strong to win back these commercial and naval bases. In the same way the trade that had passed from Constantinople never returned: for the cities of the Mediterranean preferred to deal on their own account with Syrian and Egyptian merchants rather than to pay toll to a 'middleman' in the markets of the Paleologi.

For all these reasons it can be easily seen that the new Byzantine Empire was in a far worse state of weakness and instability than the old. Like Philip IV of France, who found the financial methods of Charlemagne quite inadequate for dealing with his more modern needs and expenses, the Paleologi were confronted by a system of administering laws and exacting taxes that, having completely broken down under the strain of foreign invasion, was even more incapable of meeting fourteenth-century problems with any feasible solution. More practical rulers might have invented new methods, but the only hope of the upstart line that had usurped power without realizing the responsibility such power entailed was to seek the military and financial aid of the West as in the days of Alexius Commenus.

Little such aid was there to gain. Venice and Genoa, once eager crusaders, were now too busy contesting the supremacy of the Mediterranean to act together as allies in Eastern waters. The Popes, annoyed that the overthrow of the Latin Empire had brought about the restoration of the Greek Church, were willing enough to consider the reconversion of Byzantium held out to them as a bait; but even if they granted their sympathy they had

obviously too many political troubles of their own to make lavish promises likely of fulfilment. Western Europe, in fact, was too interested in its own national struggles to answer calls to a crusade, too blind in its narrow self-interest and prejudice against the Greeks to realize what danger the ruin of Constantinople must bring on those who had for centuries used her as a bulwark.

Andronicus II, the son and successor of Michael, was equally cruel and false, and still more of a personal coward. He saw the danger of Mahometan invasion that his father had ignored, and, in terror both of the Turks and of his own subjects, arranged to hire a band of Catalan mercenaries who had been fighting for the Aragonese against the Angevins in Sicily, in the war introduced by the Sicilian Vespers.[1] This war over, the captain of the Catalans, Roger de Flor, a Templar who had been expelled from his Order for his wild deeds, was quite willing to unsheathe his sword on a new field of glory and pillage; so that on receiving dazzling promises of reward and friendship he and his 'merry men' sailed for the East.

Once established in Greece, however, the Catalans proved so arrogant and lawless that the Greeks complained that they were a far worse infliction than the Mahometans. Quarrels ensued, and finally, in the course of a bitter dispute between Roger de Flor and Andronicus, the Spanish general was murdered as he stood talking to his master. This act of treachery, added to growing indignation at the limited supplies of money the Emperor had grudgingly disbursed for his foreign army, turned the Catalans from pretence allies into a horde of raging enemies. From the walls of Constantinople itself they were driven back, but elsewhere they burned and slew and laid waste the country, until at last, reaching Athens, they stormed the walls of that city, killed its Latin Duke, and established themselves as an independent republic.

By the time they had ceased to rove the Catalans had also ceased to be dangerous, but in their savage wanderings they had inflicted incalculable harm upon the Byzantine Empire. The

[1] See p. 229.

Andronicus who could barely hold them at bay before the gates of his capital was an Andronicus who could not hope to withstand invasion in Asia Minor; and over his Eastern boundaries, left weakly garrisoned since the days of Michael Paleologus, poured the Turks in irresistible numbers. Soon there remained to the Greek Empire, of all their provinces across the Bosporus, merely a strip of coast-line to the north of the Dardanelles, and finally this also was whittled away, and the Turks crossed the Straits and captured Gallipoli as a base for future operations in Europe.

The chief Mahometan Emir during this period of conquest was a certain Orkhan, the son of Othman, whose name in the form 'Ottoman' is still borne by his branch of the Turkish race. This Orkhan was quite as cruel and unscrupulous as the Paleologi, but far more statesmanlike; for as he conquered the territory of Greek Emperors and rival Emirs in Asia Minor he consolidated his rule over them by a just and careful government that gradually welded them into a compact state.

When a civil war broke out between John V, the grandson of Andronicus II, and his guardian and co-ruler, a wily schemer of the Michael Paleologus type called John Cantacuzenus, the latter, with utter lack of patriotism, appealed to Orkhan for aid. He even offered him his daughter in marriage, an alliance to which the Turk eagerly agreed, dispatching a large force of auxiliaries to Thrace as token of his friendly intentions towards his future father-in-law. These troops he determined should remain, and difficult indeed the Christians found it to dislodge them in later years, for the Turkish legions had been stiffened by a device of Orkhan which has done more to keep his name in men's minds perhaps than any of his victories.

It was the Emir's custom on a march of conquest not to oppress the conquered, but to exact from them a tribute both in money and in child life. From every village that passed under the rule of Orkhan his soldiers carried away from their homes a fixed number of young boys, chosen because of their health and sturdy, well-developed limbs. These children were placed in barracks, where they were educated without any knowledge

of their former life to become soldiers of the Prophet—fanatical, highly disciplined, skilled with the bow and sabre, inculcated with but one ideal and ambition—to excel in statecraft or on the battle-field.

Because of their excessive loyalty emirs would choose from among the ranks of these 'tribute children' their viziers and other chief officials, while the majority would enter the infantry corps of 'Janissaries', or 'new soldiers', whose ferocity and endurance in attacking or holding apparently impossible positions became the terror of Europe. In the words of a modern historian, 'With diabolical ingenuity the Turks secured the victory of the Crescent by the Children of the Cross, and trained up Christian boys to destroy the independence and authority of their country and their Church.'

In 1361, some years after Orkhan's death, the Turks captured Adrianople, and thus came into contact with other Christian nations besides the Greeks, namely, the Serbians and Hungarians.

The Serbians were the principal Slav race in the Balkans, and under their great ruler Stephen Dushan it had seemed likely that they might become the predominant power in Eastern Europe. The Kings of Bulgaria and Bosnia were their vassals; they had made conquests both in Albania and Greece, thus opening up a way to the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. It would have been well for Christendom if this energetic race of fighters could have subdued the feeble Greeks, and so presented to the Turks, when they crossed the Bosporus, a foe worthy to match the Janissaries in stubborn courage. Unfortunately Stephen Dushan died before the years of Turkish invasion, leaving his throne to a young son, 'a youth of great parts,' as a Serbian chronicler describes him, 'quiet and gracious, but without experience.'

Only experience or an iron will could have held together in those rough times a kingdom relying for its protection on the swords of a quarrelsome nobility; and Serbia broke up into a number of small principalities, her disintegration assisted by the ambitious jealousy of Louis the Great of Hungary, who lost no opportunity of dismembering and weakening this sister king-

dom that might otherwise prove a hindrance to his own imperial projects.

With the career of Louis we have dealt in other chapters, and have seen him humbling the Venetians, driving Joanna I out of Naples, acquiring the throne of Poland, fighting against the Turks and the Emperor Charles IV. Because he spent his energy recklessly on all these projects, Louis remains for posterity, apart from the civilizing influence of his court life, one of the arch-destroyers of the Middle Ages, the sovereign who more than any other exposed Eastern Europe to Mahometan conquest. Had he either refrained from his constant policy of aggression towards Serbia, thus allowing her to unite her subject princes in the face of the invading Turks, or had he even been powerful enough to found an Empire of Hungary that would absorb both Serbia and Constantinople and act as a bulwark in the East, mediaeval history would have closed on a different scene. Instead, the famous victories of Louis over the Turks, that made his name honoured by Christendom, were rendered of no avail by other partial victories over Christian nations who should have been his allies.

On the field of Kossovo, in 1389, the Serbians, shorn of half their provinces and weakened and betrayed by the Hungarians, met the Turks in battle. Both sides have left record of the ferocity of the struggle. 'The angels in Heaven', said the Turks, 'amazed by the hideous noise, forgot the heavenly hymns with which they always glorify God.' 'The battlefield became like a tulip-bed with its ruddy severed heads and rolling turbans.' 'Few', wrote the Serbian chronicler, 'returned to their own country.'

When the day closed, both the Serbian king, Lazar, and the Turkish sultan lay dead amid their warriors, and the victory, as far as the actual fighting was concerned, seemed to rest neither with Christian nor Moslem. Yet, in truth, the Turk could supply other armies, as numerous and as well-equipped, to take the place of those who had fallen, while the Serbians had exhausted their uttermost effort: thus the fruits of the battle fell entirely into the hands of the infidel.

'Things are hard for us, hard since Kossovo,' is a modern Serbian saying, for the Serbs have never forgotten the day when they fought their last despairing battle as champions of the Cross, and lost for a time their ambition of dominating Eastern Europe.

> There resteth to Serbia a glory, (runs the old ballad)
> . . . . . .
> Yea! As long as a babe shall be born,
> Or there resteth a man in the land—
> So long as a blade of corn
> Shall be reaped by a human hand,
> So long as the grass shall grow
> On the mighty plain of Kossovo—
> So long, so long, even so
> Shall the glory of those remain
> Who this day in battle were slain.

From the day of Kossovo the ultimate conquest of Eastern Europe by the Turks became a certainty. Lack of ambition on the part of some of the sultans and a life and death struggle in which others found themselves involved in Asia Minor against Tartar tribes merely deferred the time of reckoning, but it came at last in the middle of the fifteenth century, when Mohammed II, 'the Conqueror', determined to reign in Constantinople.

This Mohammed, famous in mediaeval history, was the son of a Serbian princess, and he is said to have grown up indifferent alike to Christianity or Islam. He is described as having 'a pair of red and white cheeks full and round, a hooked nose, and a resolute mouth', while flatterers went still farther and declared that his moustache was 'like leaves over two rosebuds, and every hair of his beard a thread of gold'. In character, from a fierce, undisciplined boy he grew into a self-willed man, intent upon the satisfaction of his ambitions and desires. He could speak, or at least understand, Arabic, Greek, Persian, Hebrew, and Latin; and chroniclers record that it was in reading the triumphs of Alexander and Julius Caesar that he was first inspired with the thought of becoming a great general.

His rival, Constantine XI, the last and best of the Paleologi, was a man of very different type from the Turk, or indeed from his own ancestors. He was devoted to the Christian religion

and Greece—brave, simple, and generous. When he first became aware of Mohammed's aggressive hostility he attempted to disarm it by liberating Turkish prisoners. 'If it shall please God to soften your heart', he sent word, 'I shall rejoice; but however that may be, I shall live and die in the defence of my people and of my Faith.' His words were put to the test when, in the autumn of 1452, the siege of Constantinople began.

The Emperor looked despairingly for Western aid, in order to secure which the Emperor John V had himself in years gone by visited Rome and made formal renunciation to the Pope of all the views of the Greek Church that disagreed with Catholic doctrine. One of the chief points of controversy had been the Catholic use of unleavened bread in the Sacrament of the Mass; another, the words of the Nicene Creed, declaring that the Holy Ghost 'proceeded' from the Son as well as from the Father.

In all matters of faith as well as of ecclesiastical jurisdiction John V, and later Constantine himself, had made open acknowledgement of the supremacy of Rome, but their compliance did not avail to save their kingdom in the hour of danger: indeed, while it evoked little military support from Catholic nations it aroused keen hostility and treachery at home. There were many Greeks who refused to endorse their sovereign's signature to what they considered an act of national betrayal, some declaring openly that the Mahometan victories were God's punishment on kings who had forsaken the faith of their fathers, and that it would be better to see the turbans of the infidels in St. Sophia than a cardinal's red hat.

When, then, Mohammed began to thunder with his fourteen batteries against the once impregnable walls of Constantinople, making enormous breaches, the reduction of the city had become only a question of days. It is said that the Sultan in his eagerness to take possession offered the Emperor and his army freedom and religious toleration if they would capitulate. 'I desire either my throne or a grave,' replied Constantine, knowing well which of the two must be his fate.

Beside some four thousand of his own subjects he could command only a few hundred mercenaries sent by the Pope, and three

hundred Genoese. Of the Venetians and other Western Europeans there were even less; and it was with this miniature army that he manned the wide circuit of the walls, led out sorties, and rebuilt as well as he could the gaps made by the heavy guns.

The contest was absurdly unequal, for Mohammed had some two hundred and fifty-eight thousand men; and in May 1453 the inevitable end came to a heroic struggle. Up through the breaches in the wall, that no labour was left to repair, climbed wave after wave of fanatical Janissaries, shouting their hopes of victory and Paradise. Beneath their continuous onslaughts the defenders weakened and broke, fighting to the last amid the narrow streets, until Constantine himself was slain, his body only recognized later by the golden eagles embroidered on his shoes.

The women, and many of the Greeks who had refused to help in this time of crisis because of the Emperor's submission to the Catholic Church, were torn from their sanctuary in St. Sophia and sold as slaves in the markets of Syria.

Thus was lost the second city of Christendom to the infidels, and the old Roman Empire, whose restoration had been a mediaeval idea for centuries, perished for ever.

Retribution, at least according to human ideas of justice, often seems to lag in history; but in the case of the fall of Constantinople some of the culprits most responsible, on account of their selfish indifference, were speedily called on to pay the penalty. Mohammed II, his ambition inflated by what he had already achieved, planned the reduction of Christendom, declaring that he would feed his horse from the altar of St. Peter's in Rome. With an enormous army he advanced through Serbia and besieged Belgrade; but here he was thrust back by a Christian champion, John Hunyadi, 'the wicked one', as the title reads in Turkish, with such loss of men and material 'that Hungary and eastern Germany were saved from serious danger for eighty years'.

With the Balkan states it was otherwise, whose governments, divided in their counsels, jealous in their rivalries, had been incapable of the union that could alone have saved them, and

one by one they were crushed beneath 'the Conqueror's' heel. Greece also came under Moslem domination, and finally the islands of the Aegean Sea that Venice had torn from Constantinople in the interests of her trade were wrested away from her, leaving her faced with the prospect of commercial ruin.

PART II. VOYAGE AND DISCOVERY

All through the Middle Ages it had been to the cities of the Mediterranean, first of all to Amalfi and Pisa, then to Marseilles, Barcelona, Genoa, and Venice, that Europe had turned as her obvious medium of communication with the East and all its fabulous wonders. In the thirteenth century a Venetian merchant, Marco Polo, setting forth with his father and uncle, had visited the kingdom of Cathay, or China, and brought back twenty years later not only marvellous tales of the court of Khubla Khan in Pekin, but also precious stones, rubies, sapphires, diamonds, and emeralds in such abundance that he was soon nicknamed by his fellow citizens 'Marco of the Millions'.

Into the delighted ears of the guests he invited to a banquet on his return he poured descriptions of a land where 'merchants are so numerous and so rich that their wealth can neither be told nor believed. They and their ladies do nothing with their own hands, but live as delicately as if they were kings.' What seems to have struck his mediaeval mind with most astonishment were the enormous public baths in the 'City of Heaven' in southern China, of which there were four thousand, 'the largest and most beautiful baths in the world.'

The banquets also given by the great Khan excelled any European feasts. They were attended by many thousands of guests, and their host, raised on a dais, had as his servants the chief nobles, who would wind rich towels round their mouths that they might not breathe upon the royal plates. For presents the Khan was accustomed to receive at a time some five thousand camels, or an equal number of elephants, draped in silken cloths worked with silver and gold. His government surpassed in its organization anything Europe had imagined since the fall of the

Roman Empire, such, for instance, as the postal system, by means of messengers on foot and horse, that linked up Pekin with lands a hundred days distant, or the beneficent regard of a ruler who in times of bad harvests not only remitted taxation but dispatched grain to the principal districts that had suffered.

Coal was used in China freely, 'a kind of black stone cut from the mountains in veins,' as Marco Polo describes it. 'It maintains the fire', he added, 'better than wood, and throughout the whole of Cathay this fuel is used.'

Besides dilating on the wealth and prosperity of China, the Venetian had also much to say of Zipangu, or Japan, of Tibet and Bengal, of Ceylon, 'the finest island in the world,' and of Java, supposed then to be 'above three thousand miles wide'.

Other travellers were to confirm many of his statements, but none told their tale so simply and realistically as Polo, while not a few, like the English Sir John Mandeville in the fourteenth century, supplied fiction in large doses where it seemed to them that truth might bore their readers. The eagerness with which either fact or fiction was swallowed bears witness, at any rate, first to the extraordinary fascination excited in mediaeval minds by such names as 'Cathay' or 'Zipangu'; and next to the general Western belief in the inexhaustible riches of the East and their determination to secure at least a portion.

When the Seljuk Turks, with their fierce animosity towards Christendom, had settled like a curtain between East and West, the dangers and expense of trading and commerce with Arabia and Asia Minor of course increased. Venice and Genoa still brought back shiploads of silks, spices, and perfumes for Western markets, but the price of these goods was increased by the tolls paid to Turkish sultans and emirs for leave to transfer merchandise from camels to trading-sloops. Then came the fall of Constantinople, when Venice, by a treaty with 'the Conqueror' in the following year, appeared to secure wonderful trading privileges. Mohammed, however, made such promises only to break them when convenient, and, so soon as he could afford to do so, because he was securely established in Europe, the tolls he demanded became heavier, not lighter, the restrictions he placed

upon trade more and more galling to Christian merchants, until the usual purchasers of Venetian goods grew exasperated at prices that doubled and trebled continually.

There were but two methods of avoiding this ever-increasing policy of exploitation apart from doing without such luxuries: either a complete conquest of the Turks, that would compel them to open up afresh the old caravan routes to the East; or else the discovery of a new route that would avoid their dominions altogether. Largely through the blind selfishness of Mediterranean cities, and especially of Venice, we have seen that the golden opportunity of aiding the Byzantine Empire had been lost for ever. Thus the first method failed. It remains to deal with the second, the voyages of discovery with which the Middle Ages fittingly close.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century there was born in Portugal a prince, Henry, third son of King John I, and grandson by an English mother of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. While he was still a boy this prince earned fame for his share in the capture of Ceuta, a Moorish town exactly opposite Gibraltar on the North African coast. To the ordinary Portuguese mind this conquest raised hopes of a gradual absorption of the southern Mediterranean seaboard, possibly of competition in the Levant with Genoa and Venice; but Prince Henry saw farther than ordinary minds. The problem that he set himself and any one, Arab or European, who seemed likely to supply a solution was —What would happen if, instead of entering the Mediterranean, Portuguese ships were to sail due south? How big was this unknown stretch of land called Africa, in the maps of which geographers hid their ignorance by placing labels, such as 'Here are hippografs! Here are two-headed monsters!'? Would it not be possible to reach the far-famed wonders of Cathay by sailing first south and then east round Africa, thus avoiding trade routes through Syria and southern Russia?

It was fortunate that Prince Henry was a mathematician and geographer himself, for many people told him in answer to his inquiries that Africa ended at Cape Nam, not so many miles south of Tangier, and others that the white man who dared to

sail beyond a certain point would be turned black by the heat of the sun, while the waters boiled about his vessel and the winds blew sheets of flame across the horizon.

Prince Henry refused to believe such tales. He could not sail himself, because he was so often occupied with wars in Africa against the Moors; but year after year he fitted out ships at his own expense, and chose the most daring mariners whom he could find, bribing them with promises of reward and fame to navigate the unknown African coast. He himself built a naval arsenal at Sagres on a southern promontory of Portugal, and here, when not busy with affairs of state, he would study the heavens, make charts, and watch anxiously for the returning sails of his brave adventurers.

During Prince Henry's lifetime Portuguese or Italians in his pay discovered not only Madeira, or 'the island of wood', as they christened it from its many forests, but the Canaries, Cape Verde Islands, and the African coast as far south as Gambia and Sierra Leone. Soon there was no longer any need to bribe mariners into taking risks, for those who first led the way on these adventurous voyages brought back with them negroes and gold dust as evidence that they had been to lands where men could live, and where there were possibilities of untold wealth. Thus the work of exploration continued joyfully.

It was in 1471, some years after the death of Prince Henry, that Portuguese navigators crossed the Equator without being broiled black by the sun or raising sheets of flame, as the superstitious had predicted. The next important step on this new road to Asia was the voyage of Bartholomew Diaz, who, sailing ever southwards, swept in an icy wind without knowing it round the Cape, past Table Mountain, and then, turning eastwards, landed at last on the little island of Santa Cruz in Algoa Bay, where he planted a cross. He would have explored the mainland also, but Kaffirs armed with heavy stones collected and drove back the landing-party.

Diaz, emboldened by his success, wished to sail farther, but his crew were weary of adventure, and with tears of regret in his eyes he was forced to yield to their threats of mutiny and turn

homewards. At Lisbon, describing his voyage, he said that on account of its dangers he had called the southernmost point of Africa the 'Cape of Storms', but the King of Portugal, hearing that this was indeed the limit of the continent, and that in all probability the way to Asia lay beyond, would not consent to such an ill-omened name. 'It shall be the Cape of Good Hope,' he declared, and so it has remained.

In 1498 the work of exploration begun by Diaz was completed by another famous navigator, Vasco da Gama. National hopes of wealth and glory were centred in his task, and when he and his company marched forth to their ships a large crowd went with them to the shore, carrying candles, and singing a solemn litany. Then the sails of his four vessels dipped below the horizon and were not seen for two years and eight months, but when at last men and women had begun to despair at the great silence, their hero reappeared amongst them, bringing news more wonderful and glorious than anything that Portugal had dared to hope.

There is little space to tell in this chapter the adventures that Vasco da Gama related to the King and his court. He and his crews, it seemed, had sailed for weeks amid 'a lonely dreary waste of seas and boundless sky': they had skirmished with Hottentots and 'doubled the Cape', caught in such a whirl of breakers and stormy winds that the walls of the wooden ships had oozed water, and despair and sickness had seized upon all. Vasco da Gama, even when ill and depressed, was not to be turned from his purpose. Eastwards and northwards he set his sails, in the teeth of laments and threats from his sailors, and so on Christmas Day landed on a part of the coast to which in memory of the most famous *Dies Natalis* he gave the name of Natal.

From Natal, battling the dread disease of scurvy brought on by a prolonged diet of salt meat, the Portuguese commander pursued his way, attacked, as often as he landed for water and fresh food, by fierce Mahometan tribes, until at last, guided by an Arabian pilot whom he had picked up, he came to the harbours of Calicut in India, where was a Christian king. The new route to Asia had been discovered. 'A lucky venture—plenty of emeralds. . . . You owe great thanks to God for having

brought you to a country holding such riches,' declared the natives, and loud was the rejoicing of the Portuguese at this glorious national prospect.

The likely effects of Vasco da Gama's voyage did not pass unnoticed elsewhere in Europe. 'Soon,' exclaimed a Venetian merchant in deep gloom, 'it will be cheaper to buy goods in Lisbon than in Venice.' The death-knell of the great Republic's commercial prosperity sounded in these words.

In the meanwhile, some years before Vasco da Gama's triumphant achievement, a still greater discovery was made that was destined in the course of time to change the whole commercial aspect of the world. Its author was a Genoese sailor, Christopher Columbus, who, tradition says, once sailed as far north as Iceland, and in the south to the island of Porto Santo. Always in his spare time he could be found bent over maps and charts, calculating, weaving around his reasoned mathematical arguments the tales of shipwrecked mariners, until at last he brought to the ears of his astonished fellow men and women a scheme for finding Cathay, neither by sailing south nor east, but due west across the Atlantic.

Here is a fourteenth-century description of the Atlantic, a dismal picture still popularly accepted in the fifteenth: 'A vast and boundless ocean on which ships dared not venture out of sight of land. For even if sailors knew the directions of the winds they would not know whither those winds would carry them; and, as there is no inhabited country beyond, they would run great risks of being lost in the mist and vapour. The limit of the west is the Atlantic Ocean.'

Many people still believed that the world was flat, and that to sail across the Atlantic was to incur the risk of being driven by the winds over the edge into space. Thus Columbus met with either reproof for contemplating such risks, or ridicule for his folly, but so convinced was he of his own wisdom that he only grew the more enthusiastic as a result of opposition.

Without money or royal patronage he could not hope to make the voyage a success, and so he laid his scheme before the King of Portugal, usually a willing patron of adventure. Unfortu-

nately for Columbus, the discoveries along the African coast promised such wealth and trade to Portugal that her ruler did not feel inclined to take risks in other directions that, while they must involve expense, as yet held no guarantee of repayment.

'I went to take refuge in Portugal,' wrote Columbus at a later date, 'since the King of that country was more versed in discovery than any other, but . . . in fourteen years I could not make him understand what I said.' Driven at last from Portugal by a decided refusal, Christopher went to Spain, sending his brother Bartholomew with a letter explaining his project to King Henry VII of England. It is interesting to note that the keen-witted Tudor, as soon as the scheme was laid before him, is said to have expressed his readiness to learn more and to lend his support; but Bartholomew had been shipwrecked on his voyage northwards, and owing to this delay Columbus had already received the patronage of Spain and set out on his voyage before his brother returned with the news.

It was Queen Isabel of Castile, wife of King Ferdinand of Aragon,[1] who after considerable hesitation, and against the advice of a council of leading bishops and statesmen, determined finally to pledge her sympathy, and tradition says her jewels if necessary, in the mariner's cause. Part of the attraction of his project lay in its appeal to her Castilian imagination, for Castile had been ever haunted by the possibilities of the bleak grey ocean that rolled at the gates of Galicia; but still more potent than the thought of discovery was the desire of spreading the Catholic Faith. This hope also inspired Columbus, who regarded his enterprise as in the nature of a crusade, believing that he had been called to preach the Gospel to the millions of heathen inhabiting Cathay.

When Columbus set forth on his first voyage to 'the Indies', as he roughly called the unknown territory he sought, those who sailed in his three ships were many of them 'pressed' men, that is, sailors ordered on board by their town, that having incurred royal displeasure was given this way of appeasing it. Thus they were without enthusiasm or any belief in what they thought their admiral's mad and dangerous adventure, and from the time that

[1] See p. 274.

they lost sight of land they never ceased to grumble and utter threats of mutiny. At one time it was the extraordinary variations in the compass that brought them trembling to complain; at another the steadiness of the wind blowing from the East that they believed would never change and allow them to return home; finally it was the sluggish waters of the Sargassa Sea, amid whose weeds they saw themselves destined to drift until they died of starvation and thirst. To every suggestion of setting the sails eastward Columbus turned a deaf ear: but for the rest he threatened, cajoled, or argued, as the occasion seemed to demand, his own heart sinking each time the cry of 'Land!' was raised and the ardently desired vision proved only to be some bank of clouds lying low upon the horizon.

At length came the news that a moving light had been seen in the darkness. 'It appeared like a candle that went up and down,' says Columbus in his diary, and all waited eagerly for dawn that revealed at last a wooded island, later called the Bahamas, but then believed to be part of the mainland of Asia. Clad in armour, and carrying the royal banner of Spain, the great discoverer of the West stepped ashore, and there, humbly kneeling, he and his crews raised to Heaven a *Te Deum* of thankfulness and joy.

Columbus made five voyages to the West in all, for the way once shown proved easy enough, nor did he need to 'press' crews for the enterprise, but rather to guard against unwelcome stowaways. The brown-skinned Indians, gaily coloured parrots, gold nuggets, and strange roots that he brought back as witness of his first success were enough to inflame the minds and ambitions of Spaniards with such high hopes of wealth and glory that they almost fought to be allowed to join the expeditions.

Vasco da Gama was rewarded for his voyage to India with a large pension and the Portuguese title of 'Dom': he died in honoured old age. It is sad to find that after the first triumphant return, when no glory and praise seemed too great to bestow on their hero, the Spaniards turned against Columbus. They blamed him because gold was not more abundant; because his settlers quarrelled and started feuds with the natives; because,

although a very great mariner, he did not prove a 'governor' able to control and manage other men easily. Not a few were jealous of his genius, and determined to bring about his ruin out of spite.

From his third voyage to the West Columbus was sent back by his enemies in chains, ill with wounded pride at his shameful treatment. Queen Isabel, hearing of it, instantly ordered his release, and tried to soothe his indignation; but not long afterwards she herself died, and Ferdinand, left to himself, was wholly intent on Aragonese ambitions in the Mediterranean. To him the conquest of Naples was far more important than any discovery of Cathay, and so Columbus's complaints went unheeded and he died in poverty forgotten by all save a few. 'After twenty years of toil and peril,' he exclaimed bitterly, as he was borne ashore from his last voyage, 'I do not own even a roof in Spain.'

The New World to which he had won an entrance was given the name of another, namely, of a Florentine, Amerigo Vespucci, who, sailing beyond the West Indies, reached the mainland.

The effect of Columbus's discovery upon the life of Europe was momentous. No longer the Atlantic lay like a grey wall between man and the Unknown. It had become a highway, not to Cathay but to a greater West, where were riches beyond all human dreaming, ready as a harvest for the enterprising and hardworking.

The central road of mediaeval commerce had been the Mediterranean, the highway of the modern world was to be the Atlantic, and the commercial future of Europe lay not with the city republics of the South but with the nations of the North and West, with Portugal and Spain, with Flanders and England, that had lain upon the fringe of the Old World but stood at the very heart of the New.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368–73.

Emperor Andronicus II	1282–1328	Stephen Dushan	1331–55
,, John V	1341–91	Marco Polo	1254–1324
Sultan Orkhan	1325–59	Henry 'the Navigator'	1394–1460
,, Mohammed II	1451–81	Cape of Good Hope rounded	1486

XXIII

THE RENAISSANCE

ALL history is the record of change, either in the direction of social progress or decay; but so gradual is this movement that, like the transition from night to dawn or noon to evening, it is beyond our vision to state the moment when tendencies began or ceased. It is only possible to note the definite changes in their achievement, and then to disentangle the threads by turning back along the twisted chain into which they have been woven.

Sometimes in history there have been so many changes within a short time that the effect has been cumulative and an epoch has been created, as at the break-up of the Roman Empire, when civilization was merged in the 'Dark Ages'. Again, it is true of Europe at the end of the fifteenth century and during the greater part of the sixteenth, a period usually called 'the Renaissance', or time of 'New Birth', because then it became apparent that the old mediaeval outlook and ways of life had vanished, while others much more familiar and easy to understand had taken their place: the Modern World had been called into being.

The most obvious change to be found at the Renaissance was the collapse of the mediaeval ideal of a world-empire ruled in the name of God by Pope and Emperor. The Western Empire still remained pretentious in its claims; but its wiser rulers, such as Rudolph I and Charles IV, had already realized that success lay rather in German kingship than in imperial influence. The Popes had been restored to Rome, but the threat of councils that could depose and reform hung like a cloud over their insistence on the absolute obedience of Christendom; and, recognizing the inevitable, the Vatican had sunk the ambitions of an Innocent III in those of a temporal Italian Prince. Searching along the chain of causes, it becomes clear enough that the

trend of history during the later Middle Ages had been this development of the smaller unity of the nation out of the bigger unity of the world-state. By the end of the fifteenth century England, France, and Spain were already nations; while even Germany and Italy, feeling the call in a lesser degree, had substituted for a wider sense of nationality devotion to a province or city state.

The second of the great changes that characterize the Renaissance was the development of the idea of man as an individual. All through the Middle Ages, except perhaps in the case of rulers, men and women counted in the life of the world around them, not so much as separate influences as a part of the system into which they were born or absorbed. In early days the tribe accepted its members' acts, whether good or bad, as something that was the concern of all to be atoned for, supported, or avenged, as a public duty. Still more strongly was this attitude expressed in family affairs, as in the numerous 'vendettas', or feuds like those of the Welfs and Waiblingen, or of 'the Blacks' and 'Whites' in Florence.

Turning from racial ties to social, we find mediaeval associations of all kinds holding a man bound, not by his own personal choice or discretion, but by the decision of the group to which he happened to be attached. The feudal system was never complete enough in practice to make a good example of this bondage, but in theory from the tenant-in-chief to the landowner lowest in the social scale there was a settled rule of life, dictating the duties and responsibilities of lord and vassal. Still more was this binding rule true of that greatest of all mediaeval corporations—monasticism, that demanded from its sons and daughters absolute obedience in the annihilation of self. St. Bernard, whose personality was so strong that he could not remain hidden amongst the mass of his fellows, was yet, we remember, angry with Abelard for this above all other failings—that he had set up his individual judgement as a test of life. In Abelard, as in Arnold of Brescia, lay the first stirrings of the independent modern spirit that at the Renaissance was to shake the foundations of the mediaeval world.

Besides monasticism there were other associations—the universities and the class corporations, merchant guilds such as the North German Hansa, and smaller city guilds, such as the 'Greater' and 'Lesser Arts' in Florence, comprising groups of lawyers, fishmongers, &c. All these last maintained a standard of uniformity, regulating not only hours of work, rate of pay, nature of employment, scale of contributions, like a modern trade union, but went much farther, interfering in the life of each individual member to insist on what he should wear in public and how he might spend the money he had earned. It was a spirit of benevolent slavery that held sway so long as the strivings of the individual mind were overborne by a sense of helplessness in the face of ignorance or by the weight of tradition.

This weight of tradition leads naturally to the third great change heralded by the Renaissance—the breaking-up of a sky curtained in mental darkness into separate groups of clouds, still heavily charged with superstition and ignorance, but their density relieved by the light of a genuine inquiry after truth for its own sake. During the Middle Ages we have seen that men and women looked back for inspiration to the Roman Empire, and this made them distrust progress, just as a timid rider will dread a spirited horse because he fears to lose control and to be carried into unknown ways.

The earliest guardian of mediaeval knowledge had been the Church, and in the light that she understood her task she faithfully taught the world about her. Her motto was 'Reverence for the Past'; but, bent in worship before the altar of tradition, she lost sight of that other great world-motto, 'Trust the Future', which has been one of the guiding stars of modern times. Her interpretation of the Faith, of the legitimate bounds of knowledge, of the limits of Art, had been almost a necessary school of discipline for the early Middle Ages with their tendency to barbaric licence; but as she civilized men's minds and their aptitude for reasoning and understanding deepened, the restrictions of the school became the bars of a prison. The mediaeval Church, once a pioneer, lost her grip on realities, her spiritual outlook became obscured by material

ambitions, her faith weakened; until at last so little sure was she in her heart of the complete truth of her teaching that she opposed and denounced criticism or discovery, much like a merchant who is secretly afraid that his methods of business may be obsolete refuses to entertain 'newfangled notions' that would open his eyes.

When Columbus laid his scheme for crossing the Atlantic before a council of bishops and leading members of the Spanish universities, mediaeval knowledge derided his presumption by quoting texts from the Old Testament and various statements of St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church. There could be no Antipodes, they argued, because it was distinctly said that the world was peopled by the descendants of Noah, and how could such men have crossed these miles of ocean? Many similar objections were raised and the mariner's project condemned, just as Roger Bacon had been judged a heretic for his scientific inquiries two hundred years before.[1] It is significant of the change of mental outlook that while Roger Bacon wasted his last years in prison and Abelard was driven from the lecture-hall to a monastery, Columbus found public support, vindicated his calculations, and so opened up a new world.

The great secret of the Renaissance is indeed this release of the restless spirit of inquiry after truth, that is as old as humanity itself, and that, swooping like a bird through the door of a cage out into the air and sunshine, reckless of danger, carried along by the sheer joy of unfettered life, sometimes foolish and extravagant in its zest for experience, was at first too absorbed in the glory and interest of freedom to feel any regret for the prison that had been at least a shelter from the many stormy problems that were to rend the modern world.

Charlemagne had believed that 'without knowledge good works were impossible'. The men of the early Renaissance were not so intent upon the importance of good works or the hope of salvation as their forefathers, but they would have assented eagerly to the statement that 'without knowledge any true understanding of human life was impossible'.

[1] See p. 207.

Had the conditions under which knowledge could be obtained remained as restricted as in mediaeval times, the Renaissance on its intellectual side would in all probability have become a cult, a movement shared by a few learned men and women to which the mass of the people in every nation had no clue; and in this way it would have died out like a plant unable to spread its roots. Human invention intervened with the discovery of printing, which brought the great thoughts of the world out of the monastic libraries, where they had been laboriously collected and copied by hand, to distribute them, slowly at first but ever faster and faster, throughout the busy centres of Europe, where brains as well as stomachs are always eager for food.

It was a German, John Gutenburg, who invented printing by means of movable types, but because he had not enough money to carry out his design he was forced to borrow from a rich citizen of Mainz called John Fust. This Fust treated John Gutenburg very badly, for he demanded back the money he had lent so soon as he understood the value of the other's secret, and by this means forced Gutenburg, when he could not pay, to hand over his plant in compensation. Fust then began to print on his own account, and when the people of Mainz saw the copies of the Bible that he produced, each number an exact replica of the first, they declared that he had sold himself to the devil and was practising magic. Thus, it is said, started the legend of Doctor Faustus that has inspired poets, musicians, and dramatists.

The first English printer was William Caxton, a Kentishman, to view whose press came King and court in great amazement, interested, but utterly unaware of what a mental revolution this small piece of machinery was to bring about.

The greatest of Italian printers were the Venetians, whose famous Aldine press produced volumes that are still the admiration of the world as well as treasure trove for book-collectors. In modern times the desire for knowledge, or rather for information, has become a scramble, and printing has degenerated into a trade. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was regarded as an art, and Aldus Manutius, the Roman who established his press at Venice, intending to reproduce an edition of all the

Greek authors then known, was a great scholar, who modelled his letters on the handwriting of the Italian poet Petrarch, and gathered around him the most intellectual and enterprising minds of his day to advise and help him. It was at the Aldine press that one of the leaders of the Dutch Renaissance, Erasmus, had several of his books printed, and Venice at this time became a centre for scholars, and for all whose minds were alive with a thirst for new impressions.

Fifteenth-century Italy was not, on the surface, so very different from Italy in the fourteenth. The complete domination of the five Powers, foreshadowed in the earlier century, had become fixed, and three of them—Milan, Florence, and Naples—had succeeded in forming an alliance to preserve the balance of power in the peninsula, and to keep at bay the ambitions of Venice, whose empire was still spreading over the mainland. In Naples ruled Ferrante I, an illegitimate son of Alfonso V of Aragon, a typical despot like the Angevins his father had replaced. In Milan the Visconti had merged themselves in the House of Sforza, through a clever ruse of one of the most famous of mediaeval *condottieri*, Francesco Sforza, who, besieging his master, Filippo Maria Visconti, in Milan in 1441, had forced him to give him his only daughter and heiress Bianca in marriage, and then to acknowledge him as his successor.

The grim traditions established by the Visconti continued under this new family, christened with their very names. Francesco's son, Galeazzo Maria, whose life was spent in debauch, is said to have poisoned his mother and buried his subjects alive. When he was assassinated, his brother, Ludovico, called from his swarthy complexion *Il Moro*, or 'the Moor', seized the reins of government, and proceeded to act on behalf of his young nephew, Gian Galeazzo, whom he kept in the background at Pavia, declaring him a helpless invalid.

Philip de Commines describes Ludovico as 'clever, but very nervous and cringing when he was afraid: a man without faith when he thought it to his advantage to break his word'. Outwardly he displayed the genial manners customary in a Renaissance prince, and presided at Milan over a court so famed for

its hospitality, wit, and intellect that it drew within its circle painters, sculptors, writers, and scholars, as well as military heroes and men of fashion.

It will be seen that Italy opened her arms wide to the new spirit of intellectual and artistic enjoyment. Venice, Naples, Milan, each vied with the other in attracting and rewarding genius: even the Popes at Rome, whose natural instinct as the guardian of mediaeval tradition was to distrust freedom of thought, were influenced by the atmosphere around them, and to Pope Nicholas V the world owes the foundation of the wonderful Vatican Library.

To the Queen of the Renaissance states we turn last—to Florence, the 'City of Flowers', that we left distracted by the internal discords of her 'Blacks' and 'Whites', and by her wars against Filippo Maria Visconti. The turning of the century had seen great changes in Florence, the whittling away of the old ideal of liberty that would brook no master, so that she became willing to accept the domination of a family superficially disguised as a freely elected government.

The Medici were no royal stock, nor were they flaunting *condottieri* like the Sforza, but a house of bankers, who by brains and solid hard work had built up for itself a position of respect, not only in Florence, but also throughout Europe, where their loans had secured the fortunes of many a monarchy that would otherwise have tumbled in ruins owing to lack of funds. It was the advantage of such monarchies to preserve the credit of the House of Medici, and so the bankers gained outside influence to aid their ambitions at home.

Within Florence the Medici posed as common-sense men of business, unassuming citizens, easy of access, ready friends, ever the supporters, while they were climbing the ladder of civic fame, of the popular party that loved to shout 'Liberty!' in the streets, while it voted her destroyers into public offices.

Cosimo de Medici, the first of the family to establish a position of supremacy, was related to many of the nobles debarred by their rank from any share in the government: but, though he won the allegiance of this faction, he took care to claim no

honour himself that might frighten the public mind with terrors of a despot. Instead, simply clad and almost unattended, he walked through the streets, chatting in friendly equality with the merchants he met, many of whose interests were identical or wrapped up with his own financial projects; discussing agriculture with the Tuscan farmers like a country gentleman, freely spending his money on the schemes of the working classes, or scattering it amongst beggars.

When he died his mourning fellow citizens inscribed on his tomb the words *Pater Patriae*, 'Father of his Country'. They had felt the benefits received through Cosimo's government: they had not realized, or were indifferent to, the chains with which he had bound them. Some bitter enemies he had, of course, aroused, but these with quiet but remorseless energy he had swept from his path. It was his custom to sap the fortunes of possible rivals by immense exactions—to make them pay in fact for the liberal government, for which he would afterwards receive the praise, while drawing away their friends and supporters by bribery and threats. At last, ruined and deserted, they would be driven from the city; and here even Cosimo did not rest, since his influence at foreign courts enabled him to hunt his prey from one refuge to another until they died, impotently cursing the name of Medici, a warning to malcontents of the length and breadth of a private citizen's revenge.

The Medici, it has been said, 'used taxes as other men use their swords', and the charge of deliberate corruption that has been brought against them is undeniable. 'It is better to injure the city than to ruin it,' once declared Cosimo himself, adding cynically, 'It takes more to direct a government than to sit and tell one's beads.'

Neither he nor his descendants were the type of ruler represented by Charlemagne or Alfred the Great. Their ideals were frankly low, with self-interest in the foreground, however skilfully disguised. When this has been admitted, however, it should be also remembered that Cosimo employed no army of hired ruffians to terrorize fellow citizens as the Visconti had done. Florence was willing to be corrupted, and if she lost the

freedom she had loved in theory, yet she rose under the benevolent despotism of the Medici to a greater height of material and political prosperity than ever before or since in her history. 'The authority that they possessed in Florence and throughout Christendom', says Machiavelli, 'was not obtained without being merited.'

It was under the fostering care of the Medici that Florence, more than any of the other Italian states, became the home of the intellectual Renaissance, from which the 'New Learning' was to radiate out across the world. This intellectual movement was twofold. Still under mediaeval influence, it began at first by finding its inspiration in the past, and so introduced a great classical revival, in which manuscripts of Greek and Latin authors and statues of gods and nymphs were almost as much revered as relics of the saints in an earlier age. Rich men hastened on journeys to the East in order to purchase half-burned fragments of literature from astonished Greeks, while in the lecture-halls of Italy eager pupils clamoured for fresh light on ancient philosophy and history. So great was the enthusiasm that it is said one famous scholar's hair turned white with grief when he learned of the shipwreck of a cargo of classical books.

Cosimo de Medici had been a 'friend and patron of learned men'; but it was in the time of his grandson, Lorenzo 'the Magnificent', that the Renaissance reached its height in Florence. It was Lorenzo who founded the 'Platonic Academy' in imitation of the old academies of Greek philosophers, an assembly that became the battle-ground of the sharpest and most brilliant intellects of the day. Here were fought word-tournaments, often venomous in the intensity of their partisanship, between defenders of the views of Plato and of Aristotle: here were welcomed like princes cultured Greeks, driven into exile by Mahometan invasion, certain of crowded and enthusiastic audiences if only they were prepared to lecture on the literary treasures of their race. The enthusiasm recalled the days when Abelard held Paris spellbound by his reasoning on theology, but showed how far away had slipped the age of dialectics.

The last great name amongst the schoolmen is that of Duns Scotus, a Franciscan of the thirteenth century, who raised the process of logical reasoning to such a fine art that it has been said of him, 'he reasoned scholasticism out of human reach'. Ordinary theologians could not dispute with him, since it made their brains reel even to try and follow his arguments, so at last they snapped their fingers at him, crying, 'Oh, Duns! Duns!' Thus by his excessive skill in intellectual juggling he reduced himself and his subject to absurdity, and 'Dunce' has passed down to posterity as a fitting name for some one unreasonably stupid.

Scholasticism, the glory of mediaeval lecture-halls, held no thrill or charm for men of the Renaissance, and though Aristotle was still revered and a great deal of labour expended on trying to make his views and those of Plato match with current religious beliefs, yet the spirit that underlay this attempt was wholly different to the efforts of mediaeval minds.

'Salvation', 'The City of God'—such words and phrases had been keys to the thought of the Middle Ages from St. Augustine to St. Dominic and St. Thomas Aquinas. To Renaissance minds there was but one master-word, 'Humanity'.

What message had these classical philosophers, that tradition held had lived in a golden age, for struggling humanity more than a thousand years later? The men and women of the Renaissance, as they put this question, hoped that the answers they discovered would agree with the Faith that the Church had taught them; but there was no longer the same insistence that they must or be disregarded as heresy. The interest in an immortal soul had become mingled with interest in what was human and transitory, with the beauty and charm of this life as well as with the glory of the next.

Searching after beauty, no longer under the stern schoolmistress 'tradition', but led by that will-o'-the-wisp 'literary instinct', the poets and authors under the influence of the Renaissance gradually turned from the use of Latin and Greek to that more natural medium of expression, their own language.

This was the second aspect of the 'New Learning', the disappearance of the belief that Latin and Greek alone were

literary, and the gradual linking up of mediaeval with modern scholarship by the discovery that the growth of national ideals and aspirations could best be expressed in a living national tongue. The forerunners of this movement lived long before the period that we usually call the Renaissance. Thus Dante, greatest of mediaeval minds, was inspired to employ his native Italian in his masterpiece, the *Divina Commedia*, that, had his genius been less original, might have been merely a classical imitation. Petrarch, the friend of Rienzi and lover of liberty, who lived at the papal court at Avignon, was half-ashamed of his Italian sonnets, yet it is by their charm still more than by his Latin letters that he lives to-day, as Boccaccio by the witty easy-flowing style of his tales.

These are the names of literary 'immortals', and perhaps it may seem strange to find, when we pass from them to the 'New Learning' itself, that the greater part of the works published by members of the 'Platonic Academy' and other intellectual circles are now as dead as the dialectics of the schoolmen. Yet it is still harder, if we turn their pages, to believe that such florid sentences and long-drawn arguments could ever have stirred men's blood to a frenzy of enthusiasm or passion. The explanation lies in the fact that for all the charm of its newly-won freedom, the Renaissance, on its literary side, was not a time of creation but of criticism and inquiry. Its leaders were too busy clearing away outworn traditions, collecting material for fresh thought, and laying literary foundations, to build themselves with any breadth of vision. Where they paused exhausted, or failed, the 'giants' of the modern world were able to erect their masterpieces.

Lorenzo 'the Magnificent' himself we can remember for the genuine love of nature and poetry apparent in his sonnets, but his claim to remain immortal in the world's history must rest, not on his literary achievements, but on his generous patronage and appreciation of scholars and artists, as well as on the political wisdom that made him the first statesman of his day.

If the literature of the Renaissance was mainly experimental in character, painting was pre-eminently its finished glory—the

representation of that sense of beauty in nature and in human life from which the Middle Ages had turned away, as from a snare set by the Devil to distract souls from Paradise. Here again, in painting, there is a twofold aspect: the artist mind seeking in the past as well as aspiring to the future for inspiration to guide his brush. It was in the life of St. Francis, 'the little Brother of Assisi', that Giotto, the great forerunner of the 'new' art, found that sense of humanity idealized that spurred him to break away from the old conventional Byzantine models, stiff, decorative, and inhuman, in order to attempt the realization of life as he saw it around him in the street and field.

Cimabue, a famous Florentine painter, had found Giotto as a shepherd lad, cutting pictures of the sheep grouped round him with a stone upon the rockside. He carried the boy away to be his apprentice, but the pupil soon excelled the master and not merely Florence but all Italy heard of his wondrous colours and designs. 'He took nature for his guide,' says Leonardo da Vinci; and many are the tales of this kindly peasant genius, small and ugly in appearance but full of the joy and humour of the world that he studied so shrewdly. The Angevin King Robert of Naples once asked him to suggest a symbol of his own turbulent Southern kingdom, whereupon the artist drew a donkey saddled, sniffing at another saddle lying on the ground. 'Such are your subjects,' he remarked, 'that every day would seek a new master.' No politician could have made a more fitting summary of mediaeval Naples.

Giotto's chief fame to-day lies in his frescoes of the life of St. Francis on the walls of the double chapel at Assisi and in the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce in Florence. Most of them, damaged by the action of time and weather on the rough plaster, have been repaired to their disadvantage, though a few remain unharmed to show the painter's clear, delicate colouring and boldness of outline. To the average sightseer to-day they seem perhaps just legendary pictures, more or less crude in design, but when Giotto painted we must remember that the crowds who watched his brush in breathless admiration read as they gazed the story of the most human of saints—a man who had but

lately walked amongst the Umbrian hills, and whose words and deeds were to them more vivid than many a living utterance.

To understand what the genius of Giotto meant to his own day we must consider the stiff unreality of former art, just as we cannot realize the greatness of Columbus by thinking of a modern voyage from the Continent to America, but only by recalling the primitive navigation of his time. Giotto, like Columbus, had many imitators and followers, some of them famous names, but the pioneer work that he had done for art was commemorated at the Renaissance when, by the orders of Lorenzo de Medici, a Latin epitaph was placed on his tomb containing these words: 'Lo! I am he by whom dead Art was restored to life . . . by whom Art became one with Nature.'

It would be impossible to condense satisfactorily in a few short paragraphs the triumphant history of Renaissance painting, the rapid development of which Giotto and his 'school' had made practicable, or even to give a slight sketch of the artists on whom that history depends. Never before has so much genius been crowded into so few years; but before we leave this pre-eminent age in modern Art, there is one arresting figure who must be described, a man who more than any other embodies the spirit of the Renaissance at its best, Leonardo da Vinci, 'foremost amongst the supreme masters of the world'.

Leonardo 'the Florentine', as he liked to call himself, was born in the fortified village of Vinci midway between Florence and Pisa. The illegitimate son of a notary, born as it would seem to no great heritage, he was yet early distinguished amongst his fellows.

'The richest gifts of Heaven,' says Vasari, 'are sometimes showered upon the same person, and beauty, grace, and genius, are combined in so rare a manner in one man that, to whatever he may apply himself, every action is so divine that all others are left behind him.' This reads like exaggeration until we turn to the facts that are known about Da Vinci's life, and find he is all indeed Vasari described – a giant amongst his fellows in physique and intellect, and still more in practical imagination. So strong

was he that with his fingers he could bend a horseshoe straight, so full of potent charm for all things living that his presence in a room would draw men and women out of sadness, while in the streets the wildest horses would willingly yield to his taming power. Of the cruelty that rests like a stain on the Middle Ages there was in him no trace—rather that hot compassion for suffering and weakness so often allied with strength. It is told of him as of St. Francis that he would buy the singing-birds sold in cages in the street that he might set them free.

His copy-books are full of the drawings of horses, and probably his greatest work of art, judged by the opinion of his day and the rough sketches still extant of his design, was the statue he modelled for Ludovico 'Il Moro' of Francesco Sforza, the famous *condottiere* poised on horseback. Unfortunately it perished almost at once, hacked in pieces by the French soldiery when they drove Ludovico from his capital some years later.

Leonardo has been called the 'true founder of the Italian School of oil-painting'. His most celebrated picture, 'The Last Supper', painted in oils as an experiment, on the walls of a convent near Milan, began to flake away, owing to the damp, even before the artist's death. It has been so constantly retouched since, that very little, save the consummate art in the arrangement of the figures, and the general dramatic simplicity of the scene depicted, is left to show the master-hand. Even this is enough to convey his genius. Amongst the most famous of his works that still remain are his 'Mona Lisa', sometimes called 'La Gioconda', the portrait of a Neapolitan lady, and the 'Madonna of the Rocks', both in the gallery of the Louvre.

Leonardo excelled his age in engineering, in his knowledge of anatomy and physics, in his inventive genius that led him to guess at the power of steam, and struggle over models of aeroplanes, at which his generation laughed and shrugged their shoulders. He himself took keen pleasure in such versatility, but his art, that held other men spellbound with admiration, would plunge him in depression. 'When he sat down to paint he seemed overcome with fear', says one account of him, and describes how he would alter and finally destroy, in despair of

attaining his ideal, canvases that those about him considered already perfect. It is little wonder then that few finished works came from the brush of this indefatigable worker; but his influence on his age and after-centuries was none the less prodigious.

Leonardo stands for all that was best in the Renaissance—its zest for truth, its eager vitality and love of experiment, but most of all for its sympathy. He is the embodiment of that motto that seems more than any other to express the Renaissance outlook: *Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto*—'I am a man, and nothing pertaining to mankind is foreign to my nature.'

Italy, we have seen, was pre-eminently the home of the Renaissance—the teacher destined to give the world the 'New Learning' as she had preserved the old during the Dark Ages. In those sunny days, when Lorenzo 'the Wise', as well as 'the Magnificent', ruled in Florence, and by his statesmanship preserved so neat a balance of politics that the peninsula, divided by five ambitious Powers, yet remained at peace, a glorious future seemed assured; but in 1492, the year that Columbus discovered America, Lorenzo died. 'The peace of Italy is dead also,' exclaimed a statesman with prophetic insight, when he heard the news: and indeed the stability and moderation that Lorenzo and his house had symbolized was soon threatened.

In Florence, Wisdom was succeeded by Folly in the person of Piero, Lorenzo's son, an Orsini on his mother's side, and an inheritor to the full of the haughty, intractable temperament of the Roman baronage. Playing his football in the streets amongst the shopkeepers' open booths, insolent to the merchants his father had courted, reckless of advice, Piero was soon to learn that a despotism, such as that of the Medici, founded not on armies but on public goodwill, falls at the first adverse wind. This wind, a whirlwind for Italy, blew from France; but it was Ludovico 'Il Moro', not the young Medici, who actually sowed the seed.

'Nervous and cringing,' as Philip de Commines had described

him, Ludovico had found himself involved by his treatment of his nephew in a fog of suspicions and fears. Left to himself, uneducated and ailing in health, Gian Galeazzo Sforza would never have dared to thwart his ambitious uncle; but he had married a Neapolitan princess of stronger fibre, a granddaughter of Ferrante I, and when she complained to her relations, and they in turn remonstrated with 'Il Moro', trouble began.

It seemed to Ludovico, assailed by secret visions of Naples allying herself with Milan's most dreaded enemy Venice, or even with Florence and Rome to secure revenge and his own downfall, that he must hastily give up the idea that Lorenzo had advocated of a balance of power within the peninsula itself, and look instead beyond the mountains for help and support. Mediaeval annals could give many instances of Popes and former rulers of Milan who had taken this same unpatriotic step, while a ready excuse could be found for invoking the aid of France, on account of the French King's descent from the Second House of Anjou, that Alfonso V, Ferrante's father, had driven from Naples.[1]

Acting, then, from motives of personal ambition, not from any wide conception of statecraft, Ludovico persuaded Charles VIII of France, son of Louis XI, that honour and glory lay in his renewal of the old Angevin claims to Naples, and in 1494, with a great flourish of trumpets, the French expedition started across the Alps. 'I will assist in making you greater than Charlemagne,' Ludovico had boasted, when dangling his bait before the young French King's eyes; but the results of what he had intended were so far beyond his real expectations as to give him new cause for 'cringing and fear'. 'The French,' said Pope Alexander VI sarcastically, 'needed only a child's wooden spurs and chalk to mark up their lodgings for the night.'

Almost without opposition, and where they encountered it achieving easy victories, the French marched through Italy from north to south, entering Florence, that had driven Piero and his brothers into exile, compelling the hasty submission of Rome,

[1] See Genealogical Table, p. 382.

sweeping the Aragonese from Naples, whose fickle population came out with cheers to greet their new conquerors.

Certainly the causes of this victory were not due to the young conqueror himself, with his ungainly body and over-developed head, with his swollen ambitions and feeble brain, with his pious talk of a crusade against the East, and the idle debauch for which he and his subjects earned unenviable notoriety. Commines, a Frenchman with a shrewd idea of his master's incompetence, believed that God must have directed the conquering armies, since the wisdom of man had nothing to say to it; but Italian historians found the cause of their country's humiliation in her political and military decadence.

We have seen how 'Companies' of hired soldiers held Italy in thrall during the fourteenth century; but with the passing of years what was once a serious business had become a complicated kind of chess with mercenary levies for pawns. Fifteenth-century *condottieri* were as great believers in war as ever Sir John Hawkwood; but, susceptible to the veneer of civilization that glosses the Renaissance, they had lost the mediaeval taste for bloodshed. What they retained was the desire to prolong indeterminate campaigns in order to draw their pay, while reducing the dangers and hardships involved to the least adequate pretence of real warfare. Here is Machiavelli's sarcastic commentary:

'They spared no effort,' he says, 'to relieve themselves and their men from fatigue and danger, not killing one another in battle but making prisoners . . . they would attack no town by night nor would those within make sorties against their besieging foes. Their camps were without rampart or trench. They fought no winter campaigns.'

Before the national levies of France, rough campaigners with no taste for military chess but only determined on as speedy a victory as possible, the make-believe armies of Italy were mown down like ninepins or ran away. Thus clashed two opposing systems—one real, the other by this time almost wholly artificial—and because of its noise and stir, 1494, the year of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy, is often taken as the boundary-

line between mediaeval and modern times, just as the year 476, when Romulus Augustulus gave up his crown, is accepted as the beginning of the Middle Ages. In both cases it is not the events of the actual year that can be said to have created the change. They are merely the culminating evidence of the end of an old order of things and the beginning of a new.

By 1494 Constantinople was in the hands of the Turks: Columbus had discovered America: John Gutenburg had invented his printing-press: Vasco da Gama was meditating his voyage to India. All these things were witness of 'a new birth', the infancy of a modern world; but the year 1494 stands also as evidence of the death of an old, the mediaeval.

Stung by the oppression and insolence of their conquerors, Italian armies and intrigue were to drive the French in the years to come temporarily out of Naples; but in spite of this success the effect of Charles VIII's military 'walk-over' was never to be effaced. Italy, in Roman times the centre of Europe from which all law and order had radiated, had clung to a fiction of this power and glory through mediaeval days. Now at last the sham was exposed, and before the forces of nationality her boasted supremacy collapsed. The centre of political gravity had changed, and with it the traditions and ideals for which the supremacy of Italy had stood.

Supplementary Dates. *For Chronological Summary, see pp.* 368-73.

Invention of Printing	1435
Caxton's Press	1474
The Aldine Press	1494
Duns Scotus	(died) 1308
Petrarch	1304–74
Giotto	1276 1337
Leonardo da Vinci	1452–1519
Ferrante I of Naples	(died) 1494
French Invasion of Italy	1494

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Eastern Europe and Asia Minor.		*France and Spain.*	
475–491	Emperor Zeno.		
		481–511	Clovis, King of the Franks.
		486	Battle of Soissons.
491–518	Emperor Anastasius.		
518–527	Emperor Justin I.		
527–565	Emperor Justinian.		
565–578	Emperor Justin II.		
		585	Visigothic Conquest of Spain complete.
610–641	Emperor Heraclius.		
622	The 'Hijrah'.		
626	Siege of Constantinople by Chosroes.		
627	Battle of Nineveh.		
634	Battle of Yermuk.		
		628–638	Dagobert I.
637	Jerusalem taken by the Moslems.		
642–668	Emperor Constans II.		
668–685	Emperor Constantine IV (Pogonatus).		
685–695 705–711	Justinian II.		
		712	Battle of Guadalete.
715–717	Theodosius III.	714–741	Charles Martel, 'Mayor of the Palace'.
717–740	Leo 'the Isaurian'.	732	Battle of Poitiers.
		751	Dethronement of the Merovingians.
786–809	Haroun al-Raschid, Caliph of Bagdad.	768–814	Charlemagne, King of the Franks.
780–797	Emperor Constantine VI.		
797–802	Empress Irene.		
		814–840	Louis I 'the Pious'.
		842	Oath of Strasbourg.
		843	Treaty of Verdun.

	Italy.		*Central and Northern Europe.*
476	Romulus Augustulus deposed, Odoacer becomes 'Patrician'.		
489	Invasion of Italy by the Ostrogoths.	480	Landing of the Angles in Britain.
493–526	Theoderic, King of Italy.		
556	Conquest of Italy by Justinian.		
568	Conquest of North Italy by the Lombards.	563	St. Columba's Mission to Scotland.
		577	Victory of West Saxons at Dyrham.
590–604	Pope Gregory I 'the Great'.	597	Mission of St. Augustine to England.
741–752	Pope Zacharias.	743	Boniface becomes Archbishop of Mainz.
752	End of Exarchate of Ravenna.		
752–757	Pope Stephen II.		
772–795	Pope Adrian I.		
795–816	Pope Leo III.		
800	Charlemagne crowned in Rome.		
		837–878	Struggle between West Saxons and Danes.
		843–876	Louis 'the German'.
858–867	Pope Nicholas I.		

Eastern Europe and Asia Minor.		*France and Spain.*	
873–867	Rupture between Churches of East and West.	880–888	Charles 'the Fat', Emperor of the West.
867–886	Emperor Basil I.	885	Siege of Paris by the Northmen.
		909	Foundation of Cluni.
		898–929	Charles 'the Simple'.
		987–996	Hugh Capet, King of France.
		1031	Break up of Caliphate of Cordova.
1039	'Seljuk' Turks conquer Caliphate of Bagdad.		
1081–1118	Emperor Alexius Commenus I.		
1096–1099	The First Crusade.		
1099	Capture of Jerusalem by Crusaders.		
1118	Order of Templars founded.		
		1138	St. Bernard attacks Abelard.
1146–1149	Second Crusade.	1153	Death of St. Bernard.
1187	Saladin takes Jerusalem.	1180–1223	Philip II 'Augustus' of France.
1189–1192	Third Crusade.		
1202	Fourth Crusade.		
1204–1261	Latin Empire of Constantinople.	1204	Philip II conquers Normandy.
1204–1260	Empire of Nicea.	1209	Albigensian Crusade.
		1212	The Children's Crusade.
		1212	Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa.
		1214	Battle of Bouvines.
1228–1229	Crusade of Frederick II.	1226–1270	Louis IX of France (St. Louis).
		1230	Union of Leon and Castile.
1248–1256	Seventh Crusade. St. Louis invades Egypt and Palestine.		

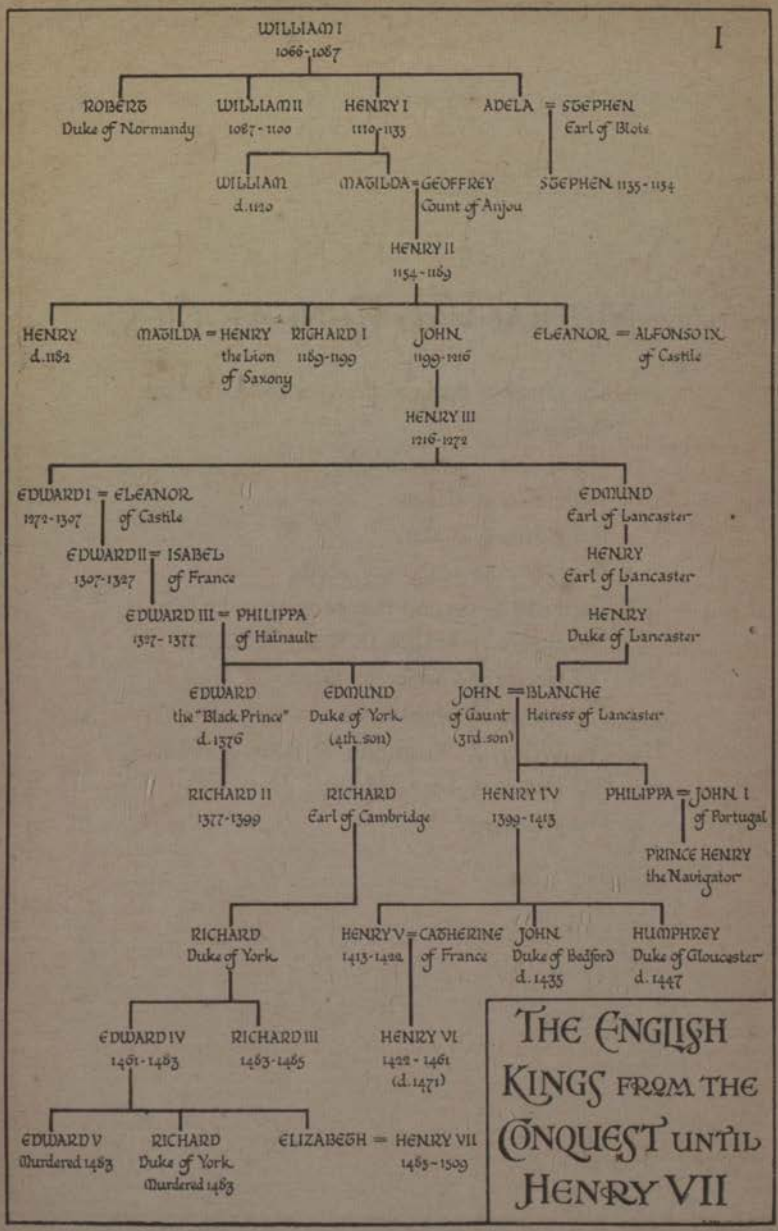
Italy.		*Central and Northern Europe.*	
		871–901	Alfred 'the Great', King of Wessex.
		878	Peace of Wedmore.
		911–918	Emperor Conrad I.
		919–936	Emperor Henry I 'the Fowler'.
		936–973	Emperor Otto I.
962	Otto I crowned Emperor of Rome.	955	Battle of Augsburg.
		973–983	Emperor Otto II.
		979–1016	Ethelred II 'the Redeless'.
		983–1002	Emperor Otto III.
		1003–1024	Emperor Henry II.
1046	Synod of Sutri.	1017–1035	Cnut—King of England.
1060–1091	Norman Conquest of Sicily.	1024–1039	Emperor Conrad II.
1073–1085	Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand).	1039–1056	Emperor Henry III.
		1056–1106	Emperor Henry IV.
1077	Humiliation of Henry IV at Canossa.	1066	Norman Conquest of England.
1088–1099	Pope Urban II.		
		1106–1125	Emperor Henry V.
		1122	Concordat of Worms.
		1137–1152	Emperor Conrad III.
1176	Battle of Legnano.	1153–1190	Emperor Frederick I—'Barbarossa'.
1183	Peace of Constance.	1170	Murder of Thomas Becket.
1198–1216	Pope Innocent III.	1190–1197	Emperor Henry VI.
1210	Innocent III; excommunication of Otto IV.		
1216–1227	Pope Honorius III.	1215–1250	Emperor Frederick II.
		1215	Magna Charta.
1223	Foundation of the Franciscan Order.		
1225	Treaty of San Germano.		
1227–1241	Pope Gregory IX.	1226	Teutonic Order moves to Prussia.
1243–1254	Pope Innocent IV.	1256–1273	The 'Great Interregnum'.
1282	The Sicilian Vespers		

Eastern Europe and Asia Minor.	*France and Spain.*
1260–1282 Emperor Michael Paleologus.	
1270 Eighth Crusade. St. Louis invades North Africa.	
1291 Fall of Acre.	
	1285–1314 Philip IV 'le Bel' of France.
	1309–1376 The Babylonish Captivity.
	1312 Suppression of the Templars.
	1337 Outbreak of the Hundred Years' War.
	1346 Battle of Creci.
	1347 English capture Calais.
	1347–1348 The Black Death.
	1356 Battle of Poitiers.
	1358 The Jacquerie.
	1360 Treaty of Bretigni.
1370–1382 King Louis 'the Great' of Hungary and Poland.	1367 Battle of Navarette.
1386 Union of Poland and Lithuania.	
1389 Battle of Kossovo.	
	1415 Battle of Agincourt.
	1419 Murder of John 'the Fearless'.
	1420 Treaty of Troyes.
	1430 Death of Jeanne d'Arc.
	1440 The Praguerie.
1448–1453 Emperor Constantine XI.	
1453 Fall of Constantinople.	1453 End of the Hundred Years' War.
	1461–1483 Louis XI of France.
	1483–1498 Charles VIII.
	1492 Columbus discovers America.
	1498 Vasco da Gama discovers Cape route to India.

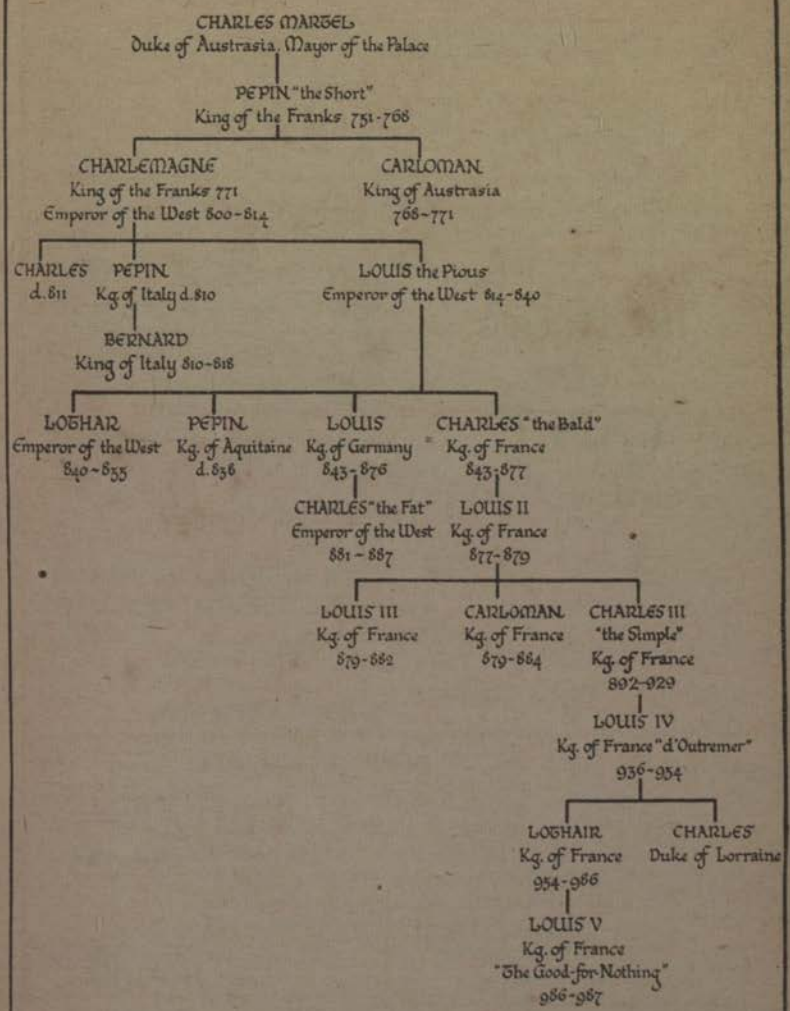
Italy.	*Central and Northern Europe.*
1294 Celestine V.	
1294–1303 Boniface VIII.	
	1273–1291 Emperor Rudolf I.
	1298–1308 Emperor Albert I.
	1309 Independence of Swiss Forest Cantons recognized.
	1314 Battle of Bannockburn.
	1315 Battle of Morgarten.
	1340 Battle of Sluys.
1347–1354 Rienzi founds the Holy Roman Republic.	1347–1378 Emperor Charles IV.
	1356 The Golden Bull.
1377 Pope Gregory XI returns to Rome from Avignon.	1370 Treaty of Stralsund.
1378–1417 The Great Schism.	
• 1380 Battle of Chioggia.	1380 Wycliffe translates the Bible.
1395 Gian Galeazzo Visconti becomes Duke of Milan.	1397 The Union of Kalmar.
	1410–1437 Emperor Sigismund.
	1410 Battle of Tannenburg.
	1414–1418 Council of Constance.
1417 Election of Pope Martin V. End of the Schism.	1415 Death of John Huss.
	1431 Council of Basel.
	1436 John Gutenburg invents the Printing Press.
	1438–1439 Emperor Albert II.
	1440–1493 Emperor Frederick III.
	1455–1485 The Wars of the Roses.
1469–1492 Lorenzo de Medici rules Florence.	1476 Battles of Granson and Morat.
	1477 Battle of Nanci.
1494 Charles VIII invades Italy.	

Mediaeval Genealogies

1 The Kings of England from the Conquest until Henry VII
2 The House of Charlemagne
3 The House of Capet
4 The House of Valois
5 The Norman Rulers of Sicily
6 The First & Second House of Anjou in Naples
7 The House of Aragon in Spain & Naples
8 The House of Castile & Leon
9 The Guelfs & Ghibellines
10 The Dukes of Burgundy & House of Habsburg
11 The House of Luxemburg
12 The Paleologi


I
WILLIAM I
1066-1087
ROBERT
Duke of Normandy
WILLIAM II
1087-1100
HENRY I
1100-1135
ADELA = STEPHEN
Earl of Blois
WILLIAM
d.1120
MATILDA = GEOFFREY
Count of Anjou
STEPHEN 1135-1154
HENRY II
1154-1189
HENRY
d.1182
MATILDA = HENRY
the Lion
of Saxony
RICHARD I
1189-1199
JOHN
1199-1216
ELEANOR = ALFONSO IX
of Castile
HENRY III
1216-1272
EDWARD I = ELEANOR
1272-1307
of Castile
EDMUND
Earl of Lancaster
EDWARD II = ISABEL
1307-1327
of France
HENRY
Earl of Lancaster
EDWARD III = PHILIPPA
1327-1377
of Hainault
HENRY
Duke of Lancaster
EDWARD
the "Black Prince"
d.1376
EDMUND
Duke of York
(4th. son)
JOHN = BLANCHE
of Gaunt
(3rd. son)
Heiress of Lancaster
RICHARD II
1377-1399
RICHARD
Earl of Cambridge
HENRY IV
1399-1413
PHILIPPA = JOHN I
of Portugal
PRINCE HENRY
the Navigator
RICHARD
Duke of York
HENRY V = CATHERINE
1413-1422
of France
JOHN
Duke of Bedford
d.1435
HUMPHREY
Duke of Gloucester
d.1447
EDWARD IV
1461-1483
RICHARD III
1483-1485
HENRY VI
1422-1461
(d.1471)
EDWARD V
Murdered 1483
RICHARD
Duke of York
Murdered 1483
ELIZABETH = HENRY VII
1485-1509
THE ENGLISH KINGS FROM THE CONQUEST UNTIL HENRY VII

2



The House of Charlemagne

3

The House of Capet

ROBERT
the Strong
Duke of the French

ODO
Count of Paris
King of the West Franks

ROBERT
King of the West Franks

HUGH the Great
Count of Paris

HUGH CAPET
King of France 987-996

ROBERT II
996-1031

HENRY I
1031-1060

PHILIP I
1060-1108

LOUIS VI
1108-1137

LOUIS VII - m (1) ELEANOR of Aquitaine = Henry II
1137-1180 (2) ADELA of Champagne of England
Count of Anjou

PHILIP II "Augustus"
1180-1223

LOUIS VIII = BLANCHE of Castile
1223-1226

LOUIS IX
(St Louis)
1226-1270

CHARLES
Count of Anjou & Provence
& King of Sicily
(See Table VI-First House of Anjou
in Naples)

PHILIP III "The Rash"
1270-1285

PHILIP IV "le Bel"
1285-1314

CHARLES = MARGARET
Count of Valois of Sicily

PHILIP VI
of Valois
(See Table IV - The
House of Valois)

LOUIS X
1314-1316

PHILIP V
1316-1322

CHARLES IV
1322-1328

ISABEL = EDWARD II
of England

EDWARD III
of England

4

The House of Valois

CHARLES
Count of Valois

PHILIP VI
1328-1350

JOHN "the Good"
1350-1364

CHARLES V
1364-1380

LOUIS
Duke of Anjou
(See Table VI ~ Second House of Anjou in Naples)

PHILIP "the Bold"
Duke of Burgundy
(See Table X ~ Dukes of Burgundy)

JEANNE = CHARLES
"the Bad"
of Navarre

ISABEL = GIAN GALEAZZO
Visconti

CHARLES VI
"The Mad"
1380-1422

LOUIS = VALENTINA
Duke of Orleans
murdered 1407
Visconti

CHARLES VII
1422-1461

CATHERINE = HENRY V
of England

CHARLES
Duke of Orleans

LOUIS XI
1461-1483

HENRY VI
of England

CHARLES VIII
1483 ~ 1498

LOUIS XII
1498-1515

5

The Norman Rulers of Sicily

TANCRED DE HAUTEVILLE

WILLIAM DE HAUTEVILLE

ROBERT GUISCARD
Duke of Apulia
1060-1085

ROBERT I
Count of Sicily

ROGER II
King of Sicily & Naples
d. 1134

ROGER
Duke of Apulia

WILLIAM
"the Bad"

TANCRED

WILLIAM
"the Good"
d. 1189

CONSTANCE = EMPEROR HENRY VI

EMPEROR FREDERICK II

6

THE FIRST HOUSE OF ANJOU IN NAPLES

LOUIS VIII of France
1223 ~ 1226

CHARLES
Count of Anjou & Provence
& King of Sicily & Naples (d. 1285)

CHARLES II
d. 1309

CHARLES MARTEL — ROBERT King of Naples — JOHN of Durazzo — MARGARET = CHARLES of Valois [See Table IV for House of Valois & also The Second House of Anjou in Naples]

CAROBERT of Hungary — CHARLES of Calabria

LOUIS the Great King of Hungary — ANDREW = JOANNA I d. 1382 — MARIA = CHARLES d. 1348 — LOUIS

SIGISMUND = MARIA of Luxemburg — HEDWIG = JAGELLO of Lithuania (King Ladislas V of Poland)

MARGARET = CHARLES III of Durazzo

LADISLAS d. 1414 — JOANNA II d. 1435

THE SECOND HOUSE OF ANJOU IN NAPLES

CHARLES Count of Valois = MARGARET of Sicily

PHILIP VI
1328 ~ 1350

JOHN "the Good"
1350 ~ 1364

CHARLES V
1364-1380

LOUIS Duke of Anjou
d. 1385

LOUIS II
d. 1417

LOUIS III
d. 1434

RÉNÉ LE BON*
d. 1480

CHARLES
Duke of Maine

MARY = CHARLES VII of France

YOLANDE = FREDERICK of Vaudemont

CHARLES
d. 1481

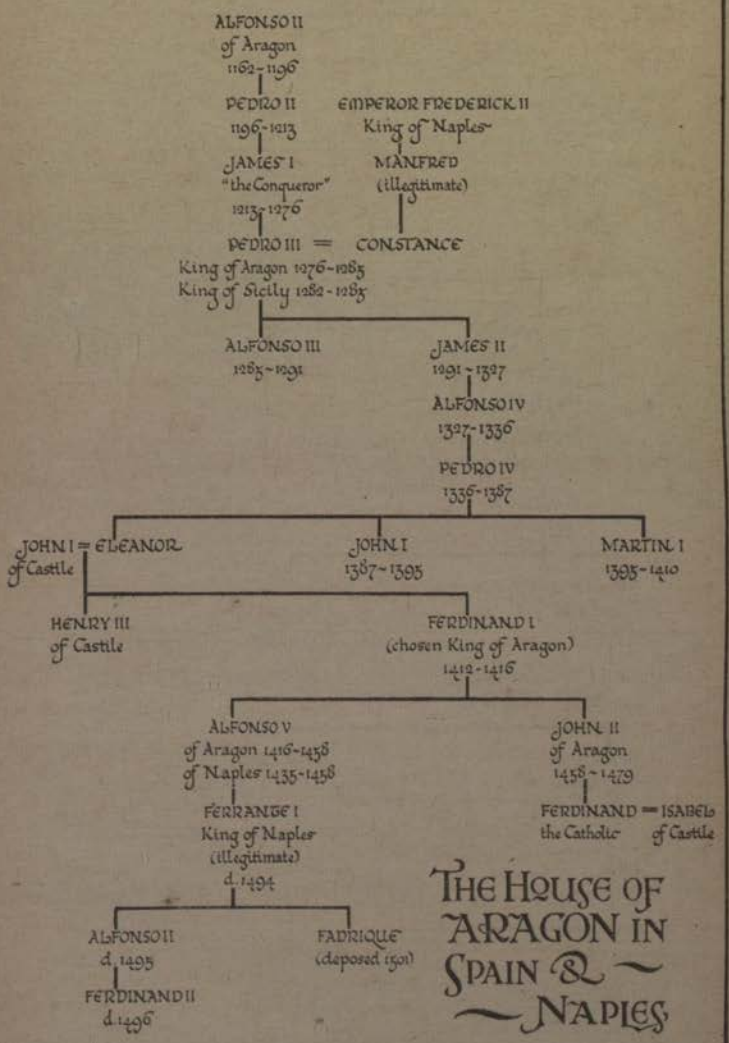
LOUIS XI

RÉNÉ I Duke of Lorraine

CHARLES VIII

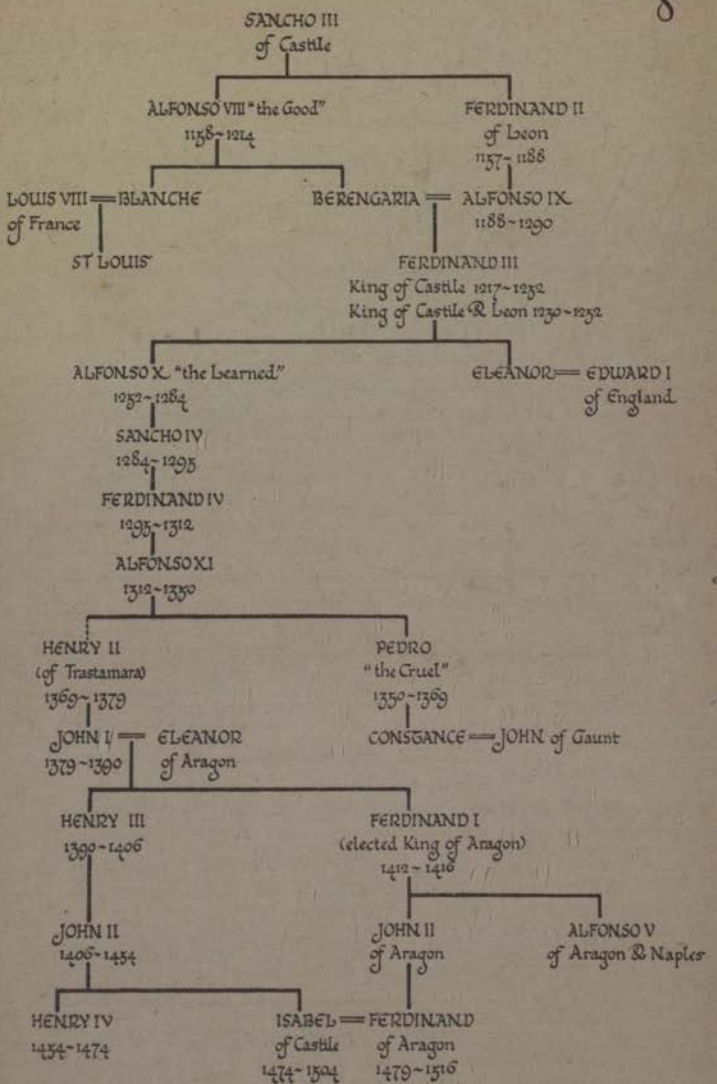
*René le Bon disinherited his grandson René Duke of Lorraine and left his claims to Naples to his nephew Charles - with remainder to the French Crown. In this way Charles VIII was enabled to claim the Neapolitan throne.

7



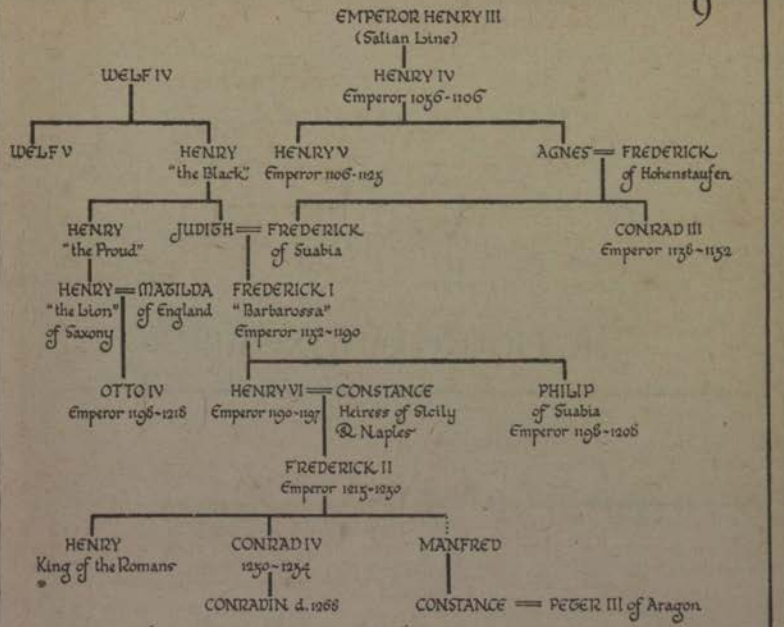
THE HOUSE OF ARAGON IN SPAIN & NAPLES

8



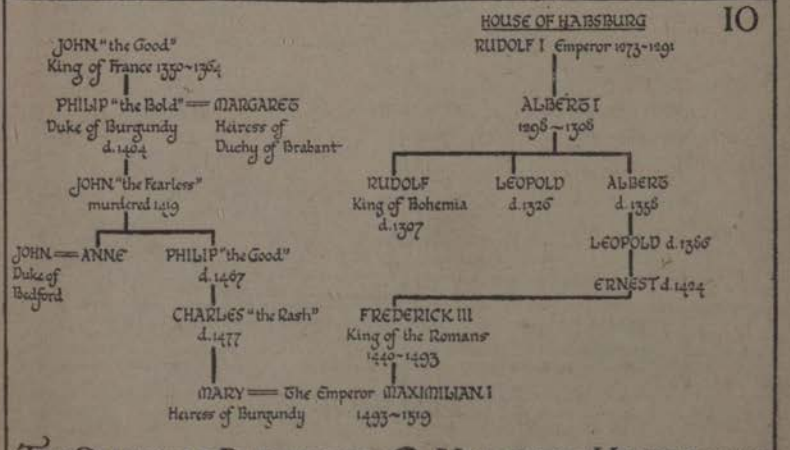
The House of Castile & Leon

9



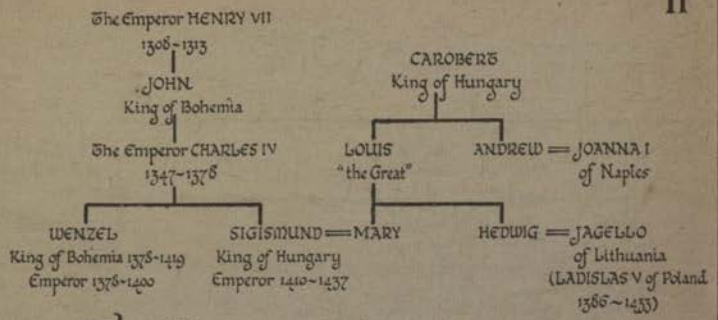
The Guelfs & Ghibellines

10



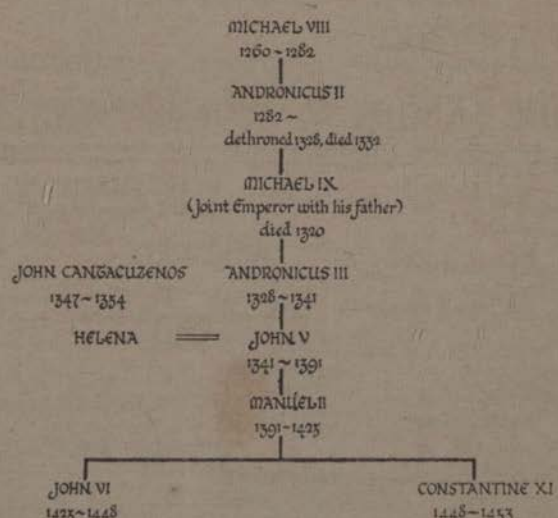
The Dukes of Burgundy & House of Habsburg

II



The House of Luxemburg

12



The Paleologi

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